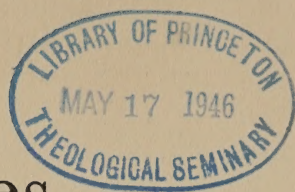


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Colonial churches of
Tidewater Virginia

*COLONIAL CHURCHES
OF TIDEWATER VIRGINIA*



Colonial Churches of Tidewater Virginia

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*Historiographer
Diocese of Southern Virginia*



RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

W H I T T E T A N D S H E P P E R S O N

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TO
EARL GREGG SWEM
WHOSE SYMPATHETIC INTEREST INSPIRED
AND MADE POSSIBLE THIS WORK



Foreword

AS EDITOR of the second series of the *William and Mary College Historical Quarterly*, the writer received in March, 1938, a contribution from Mr. George Carrington Mason on the churches of Princess Anne County, Virginia. This disclosed so much new and valuable information that had been acquired, undoubtedly, by exhaustive study in accordance with exact archaeological methods, supported by examination of county court and parish records, by colonial laws and by references to the well-known printed works on church history, that it was eagerly accepted for publication. It was evident at once that a new star had risen upon the historical horizon of Virginia. Mr. Mason was urged to continue his studies, and for a period of five years, the writer is happy to say, the *Quarterly* had the privilege of printing each new contribution as it was completed.

These articles, after considerable revision and expansion, are now published in the present volume; when appearing in the *Quarterly* they received general approbation as a significant addition to our knowledge of the churches and of the social and religious development of Tidewater Virginia. This work will be acclaimed one of the few studies of early American buildings prepared in a thoroughly scientific manner. Mr. Mason has the training of an architect and engineer, and in addition, possesses an acute understanding of historical method. Moreover, he is a sympathetic but not biased churchman. Such a combination of accomplishments is uncommon in writers on early American architecture and the social life of which it was an expression.

In the recent laudable revival of interest in Virginia history much has been hastily written; as a result vague and unfortunate opinions have arisen about the social and religious life of the colonial period. This volume, the result of an exact and thorough study of the parishes, of the vestries and parishioners, and of their chapels and churches, will help to dispel some of the uncertainties that have surrounded the church history of the first two centuries.

It is the earnest hope of the writer of this foreword that sufficient support will be forthcoming from the public to encourage Mr. Mason to publish a second volume.

E. G. SWEM

*The College of
William and Mary in Virginia*

Introduction

THIS VOLUME is based on a study of the colonial church buildings of Tidewater Virginia, the results of which were first published in the William and Mary Quarterly Historical Magazine (Second Series), during the years 1938-1943. This study was prompted by the author's belief that the standard historical works on the colonial Church in Virginia, being devoted mainly to the ecclesiastical history of the Church and its ministers, are unsatisfactory as a source of information about the colonial church buildings.

The territory covered by this work includes the Eastern Shore and the southern counties of Tidewater Virginia. It is the author's intention to deal with the other fifteen Tidewater counties in a later volume, to be published as soon as permitted by the removal of war-time restrictions on exploration and research.

The work has been thoroughly revised since its initial appearance and includes much additional information. It is illustrated with the original plates, which are made from the author's own maps, drawings and photographs. In the 21 counties and 50 parishes covered by this book, about 180 colonial churches are located or otherwise described. Of these, 166 are houses of worship of the Established Church of England, and the rest are dissenting meeting-houses.

This study reveals a very early development of the Church in the region covered by this book. By the end of the third decade of settlement in the Virginia colony, a cordon of ten churches, spaced only six to ten miles apart, was already established in the virgin wilderness along the James River, below Jamestown, and the total number of churches in the colony was doubled within the decade following.

The location of the earliest colonial churches was chosen for accessibility by water, prior to the general development of roads and bridle paths for travel by land. Later on, a more decisive factor in the choice of a church site was the presence of a good spring of drinking water, although its lack was often supplied by digging a well. Churches were occasionally placed at a road fork or crossroads, for greater accessibility, but this was the exception, rather than the rule.

The usual church site was an acre in extent, but churchyards of a half acre or less were not uncommon and much larger lots were sometimes purchased for this purpose. The land-owner's permission for the erection of a church building on his property was often all that was obtained before work was begun. A deed to the site was rarely given,

I N T R O D U C T I O N

if at all, until after the church was built and, in some cases, not until many years later. The earliest churches were often erected on the glebe land, or parish farm.

All colonial churches of the Anglican Establishment were oriented, as required by English ecclesiastical law, having the long axis of the building set east and west, with the chancel in the east end. The main entrance was almost invariably in the west end, with a secondary entrance in the south side, near the chancel, and in cross-shaped buildings there was a doorway in each end of the transept. The largest churches, even if not cruciform, often had a north entrance opposite the south one. Only a single tier of windows was provided in the earlier churches, but toward the close of the colonial period an upper row of windows was generally added, even in the absence of galleries to be lighted by them.

For the most part, Virginia colonial churches were originally rectangular in floor plan but frequently became T-shaped through enlargement by addition of a wing at right angles to the building. A few appear to have been T-shaped when first erected. The large cruciform church seems to have been an eighteenth-century development and was comparatively rare. Most of these had the form of a Latin cross, with the nave longer than the chancel, but a few had all four wing projections of exactly the same length and width, forming a Greek cross. During the reconstruction necessary for restoration to service after years of abandonment, a number of cruciform and T-shaped churches reverted to rectangular shape, through the demolition of wings too ruinous to be repaired.

Contrary to popular belief and tradition, the bricks used in the erection of these churches were not imported from England, since the local abundance of clay for making bricks and of wood for burning them, coupled with the colonists' brick-making skill, made such importation superfluous. Ship's manifests of the early eighteenth century have been found which prove the importation of small quantities of brick, but this was probably used for architectural trim.

No account of the Virginia colonial churches would be understandable without some explanation of their general abandonment and destruction, during the century following the colonial era. Out of 250 colonial churches and chapels believed to have been in service at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, only 50 have come down to us, so that for every one of these churches that has survived, four have been destroyed.

INTRODUCTION

Built and maintained by public taxation, these church buildings were left without support when those taxes were remitted at the opening of the War, and the Church itself was disestablished following its close. The general decline of religion throughout the state, after the Revolution and the war of 1812, culminated in the period when "the churches mouldered away", bereft of ministers, congregations, parish lands, and financial support, and this condition was aggravated by prejudice against the Episcopal Church as an English institution.

During this period of abandonment, varying in length from a few years to half a century, in different parishes, the colonial churches were left a helpless prey to the elements and every passing vandal. Many were deliberately burned or battered down for their valuable materials, while others were simply neglected until their roofs fell in, after which the ruins were carried away for building purposes, until only the foundation trenches now remain to mark their sites. Lying directly in the path of the invading armies, during the Civil War, many Virginia colonial churches that had survived the earlier ordeal of abandonment were desecrated and destroyed by the Federal troops. It is fortunate that those which have been preserved and restored to their colonial appearance include some of the noblest examples of their kind.

As a result of the extensive loss of parish and county records in Virginia, the assignment of a definite construction date to any colonial church is difficult and uncertain at best. The antiquity of a historic structure is usually exaggerated in the public mind, and it is hard to overcome long-held but erroneous convictions. The publication of evidence that contradicts accepted tradition inevitably arouses the hostility of those who are unwilling to have their cherished beliefs disturbed, even by the breath of truth.

In the following pages, the author has endeavored to let the facts speak for themselves and to give both sides of any historical controversy with equal fairness. If readers who disagree with the conclusions reached in this book will be kind enough to communicate their objections, the author will be happy to assist in proving himself wrong, since his only purpose in making this study is to arrive at the truth.

GEORGE CARRINGTON MASON

*Newport News, Virginia,
August, 1944.*

Acknowledgments

THE author's grateful acknowledgments are made to the clerks of court, in all the counties covered by this work, for their unfailing courtesy and cooperation; to the librarians and archivists of the state, for their willing assistance of his research; and to the local historians in the various counties, for their generosity in sharing with him their accumulated knowledge. Thanks are due to his wife for valued contributions from her own research and, above all, for her unflagging interest and pride in the book and her constant readiness to share the labor of its preparation.

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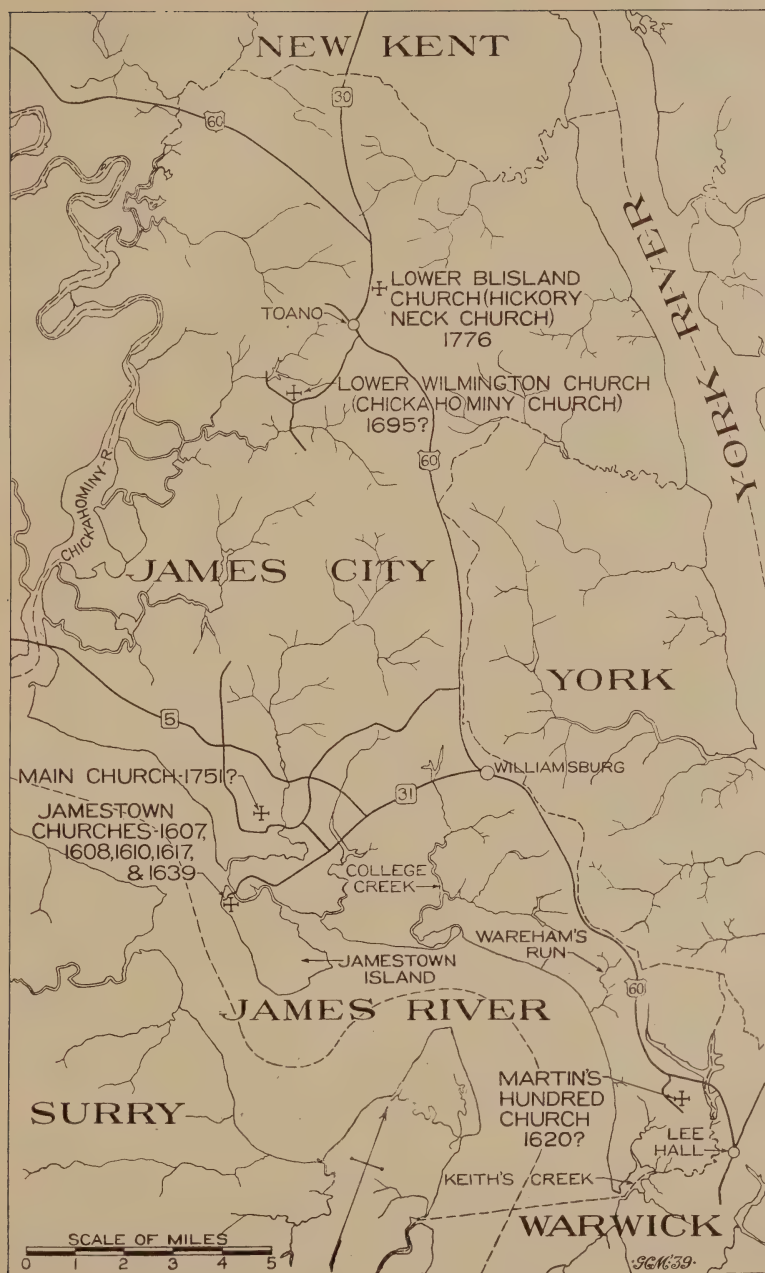




PLATE 2

Jamestown Church tower ruin.

CHAPTER I.

James City County Churches

THE ESTABLISHED English Church in the colony of Virginia originated within the present limits of James City County, through the founding of its first church at Jamestown in 1607. This Mother Church, as represented by successive buildings, had many associations with historic events and personages, which lend unrivalled interest to its story. The same interest attaches in lesser degree to the other colonial churches of James City County, since they were among the earliest offshoots from the parent church. Unfortunately, almost all these ancient edifices, together with their parish records, have completely disappeared, and the county's colonial annals have largely perished in successive fires at Jamestown, Richmond and Williamsburg.

The earliest established bounds of the Jamestown settlement, as proclaimed by Governor Samuel Argall in 1619, included, in addition to the island itself, the adjacent mainland on both sides of the James River.¹ Although mentioned as "James Towne" in chronicles and state correspondence as early as 1611, the settlement was officially named "James City," from which the county's name was later derived. The corporation of James City was the oldest of "the fower ancye[n]t burroughs," known as James City, Elizabeth City, Charles City and Henrico, which, together with the Eastern Shore, composed the infant colony in 1618.² This early incorporation was succeeded in 1634 by James City County, one of the eight original shires into which Virginia was then divided.³

James City County, as thus constituted, was hemmed in on three sides by the original shires of Warrosquyoake (later Isle of Wight), Warwick River (later Warwick), Charles River (later York) and Charles City, but had an indefinite extension to the southwest. This extension was cut off at the James River in 1652 by the formation of Surry County,⁴ and James City's remaining area was further reduced in 1720, when its territory west of the Chickahominy River was annexed to Charles City County.⁵

¹ Brown, *First Republic in America*, 287.

² Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London*, III, 100.

³ Henning, *Statutes at Large*, I, 224.

⁴ Robinson, *Virginia Counties*, 87.

⁵ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVIII, 112.

According to the census of 1634, James City County, as formed in that year, extended only to the Chickahominy River, but it later acquired territory west of that stream through the formation and subsequent enlargement of one of its parishes.

Substantially the present limits of James City County were attained in 1766, through the exchange of its long upper end for the lower end of New Kent County, to make a more convenient division between the two counties.⁶ Minor revisions of the James City-York County line occurred in 1769, when it was enacted that it run down the middle of the main street in Williamsburg, from college to market square, and that a site for a new court-house be ceded to James City on the York County side of the street.⁷ It was not until 1870 that James City County took in the whole of Williamsburg, to simplify court jurisdictions. The existing Bruton Parish Church in that city was therefore in York County throughout the colonial era, and accordingly will be discussed in a later chapter on the old York churches.⁸

It has been pointed out by Dr. G. MacLaren Brydon that each of the early plantations in Virginia constituted a parish of itself, sufficiently divided from other similar parishes by the intervening wilderness. Each of these earliest parishes was either superseded by a later parish set up by legislative enactment or county court order, or else formed the nucleus of a larger parish of the same name.⁹ Through such processes, the parishes of James City County, by the end of the seventeenth century, had become reduced to five, known as James City, Martin's Hundred, Wallingford, Bruton and Wilmington. Of these five parishes, the last two extended into neighboring counties, thus complicating the record of their development and boundaries.

The first of these plantation parishes was, of course, James City itself, and its earliest church services have been expressively described for us by Captain John Smith in these words: "When I went first to Virginia, I well remember wee did hang an awning (which is an old saile) to three or foure trees to shadow us from the Sunne, our walles were railes of wood, our seats unhewed trees, till we cut planks, our Pulpit a bar of wood nailed to two neighbouring trees. In foul weather we shifted into an old rotten tent; for we had few better, and this came by the way of adventure for new. This was our Church, till we

⁶ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, VIII, 208.

⁷ *Ibid.*, VIII, 405.

⁸ See page 238.

⁹ Brydon, *Parish Lines in Diocese of Virginia*, 4.

built a homely thing like a barne, set upon cratchets, covered with rafts, sedge and earth; so was also the walls: the best of our houses [were] of the like curiosity; but the most part farre much worse workmanship, that could neither well defend wind nor rain. Yet we had daily Common Prayer morning and evening, every Sunday two Sermons, and every three moneths the holy communion, till our minister [the Reverend Robert Hunt] died.”¹⁰

It is evident that neither the awning hung from the forest trees nor the old tent used in wet weather constituted a church building in any real sense, in spite of Captain Smith’s metaphorical reference to walls and pulpit. The crude rustic building last described must therefore be regarded as the first church at Jamestown.

In his recently published study of the first settlements in Virginia and Maryland,¹¹ Mr. Henry C. Forman makes it clear that the log cabin of the later pioneers was unknown to the early colonists, who brought with them from England the construction methods in use there at that period. The simplest of these was the “crotch” system of building, in which both the roof and walls were supported by pairs of crotches, or forked posts, fastened together at the top to carry the ridge pole and widely spread at the base. Mr. Forman points out that Smith’s use of the word “cratchets” indicates that this system was used in building the first Jamestown Church, which may have had crotches made from the natural forks of trees, and roofs and walls of rough saplings (“rafts”) thatched with marsh sedge or reeds.

This first church did not last long, for, during Smith’s absence on an exploring trip, it was burned in the fire of 1608, which also destroyed the other buildings within the original fort and even consumed the palisades enclosing it.¹² Upon Smith’s return, there was at once erected a second church, which was probably also of “crotch” construction. According to a contemporary chronicle, this new edifice was built with the aid of Captain Newport’s mariners, who delayed their return to England, ostensibly for the purpose of rendering this aid, but actually because of their infection with the “gold fever” then rife at Jamestown, when there was “no talke, no hope, no worke, but dig gold, wash gold, refine gold.” That the sailors’ assistance was not worth what it cost is strongly hinted by the chronicler, who writes:

¹⁰ Arber and Bradley, *Works of Capt. John Smith*, II, 957.

¹¹ Forman, *Jamestown and St. Mary’s*, 30.

¹² Arber and Bradley, *Works of Capt. John Smith*, II, 406.

"Little neede there was that the ship should stay, the[i]re wages run on, our victuals consume, 14 weekes, that the Mariners might say they did help to build such a golden Church that we can say the raine washed neere to nothing in 14 days."¹³

This frail second church building was still standing, although greatly in need of repair, when Sir Thomas Gates reached Jamestown on the 20th May, 1610, after shipwreck on the Bermudas, and found that only sixty out of more than four hundred colonists had survived the disastrous "starving time" of the preceding winter. William Strachey, the new secretary of the colony, who had accompanied Gates, records that "Our much grieved governour first visiting the church caused the bell to be rung, at which (all such as were able to come forth of their houses) repayred to church where our Minister Master Bucke made a zealous and sorrowful prayer."¹⁴

Three weeks later, when Lord de la Warr saved the starving colony from abandonment, by his timely arrival with additional men and supplies, he followed the same procedure and assembled the colonists in the church for a sermon by the minister and an address by himself. According to Strachey, this second Jamestown Church was located "in the midst" of the settlers' first fort, and it is described by him as "a pretty Chappell though (at this time when we came in) as ruined and unfrequented, but the Lord Governour and Captaine Generall, hath given orders for the repairing of it and at this instant, many hands are about it."¹⁵

On the strength of Strachey's use of the word "repairing," it has been generally accepted by historians that Lord de la Warr merely renovated an existing church. Such an interpretation is seen to be unfounded, in the light of Captain John Smith's earlier statement that upon his return to Jamestown, after the fire of 1608, "the building of Ratcliffe's palace [was] stayed as a thing needlesse, the church was repaired."¹⁶ This contemporary usage of the verb "repair" to describe the reconstruction of a building completely destroyed by fire does not appear to justify the assumption that it must imply mere renovation.

That Lord de la Warr's church of 1610 was a new building, and therefore the third church at Jamestown, seems evident from

¹³ *Ibid.*, II, 408.

¹⁴ *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (Glasgow, 1905), XIX, 54.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, XIX, 55.

¹⁶ Arber and Bradley, *Works of Capt. John Smith*, I, 121.

Strachey's description of it: "It is in length threescore foote, in breadth twenty foure, and shall have a Chancell in it of Cedar and a Communion Table of the Blake [black] walnut, and all the Pewes of Cedar, with fair broad windowes, to shut and open, of the same wood, a Pulpit of the same, with a Font hewen hollow, like a Canoa, with two Bels at the West end."¹⁷ The above account reveals this building as the largest of all the Jamestown churches and far too elaborate and substantial to be identified with the flimsy rustic structure constructed by the aid of Newport's sailors, two years earlier. This conclusion is also borne out by Strachey's use of the future tense, as in a specification for a new building. From the character of the details given, it seems probable that this third church was of sawn or hewn timber and that it was the first frame church built at Jamestown.

Acceptance of Lord de la Warr's church as a new building renders it unnecessary to conclude that it stood inside the original fort, like the second church, with which it has hitherto been identified. It therefore seems possible that this third church of 1610 occupied a new site, within the enlarged town of four acres which had already been paied in by that date.¹⁸ The recent discovery, in ground traversed by a drainage ditch, of badly rotted large timber sills, extending for more than forty feet, parallel to the present church and just south of the existing churchyard, may offer a clue to the actual location of this ancient church site.

Strachey's account continues with this graphic picture of the unwonted pomp and ceremony observed in religious services at the new church: "It is so cast as it be very light within and the Lord Governour and Captaine Generall doth cause it to be kept passing sweet and trimmed up with divers flowers with a Sexton belonging to it, and in it every Sondag wee have sermons twice a day and every Thursday a Sermon, having true [two?] preachers which take their weekly turnes . . . Every Sunday, when the Lord Governour and Captaine Generall goeth to Church, he is accompanied with all the Counsailors, Captaines, other Officers and all the Gentlemen, and with a Guard of Holberdiere in his Lordship's livery, faire red cloakes, to the number of fifty, both on each side and behinde him: and being in the Church, his Lordship hath his seate in the Quier, in a green

¹⁷ *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (Glasgow, 1905), XIX, 56.

¹⁸ *Colonial Records of Virginia*, 75.

Velvet Chaire, with a Cloath, with a Velvet Cushion spread on a Table before him, on which he kneeleth, and on each side sat the Counsell, Captaines, and Officers, each in their place, and when he returneth home againe, he is waited on to his house in the same manner."¹⁹ The choir, often spelled "quire" or "quier," as above, in ancient records, was the part of the chancel which came between the sanctuary and the nave or body of the church.

This third Jamestown Church of 1610 is historically memorable as the scene of the marriage of Pocahontas to John Rolfe in 1614. Although evidently more substantial than its predecessors, it, also, could only be kept in service through constant effort, and the first recorded action of Lord de la Warr's successor and deputy-governor, Sir Thomas Dale, was to order the church repaired.²⁰ It was nevertheless reported that, when Captain Samuel Argall took over the government in May, 1617, he found "In Jamestown but five or six houses, the church down, the Palizados broken . . . the storehouse being used for the church."²¹

Making due allowance for the fact that such contemporary accounts frequently were overdrawn for partisan purposes,²² it still seems evident that Lord de la Warr's church was in ruins when Argall began his two-year term as deputy-governor. There is equally strong, if equally partisan, evidence that he replaced it with a new church building. This evidence is found in "A Breife Declaration of the Plantation of Virginia during the first Twelve Yeares," written in 1624 by "the Ancient Planters Remaining Alive in Virginia," which is known to have been a petition to the King by Governor Sir Francis Wyatt and the Council and Assembly of Virginia.²³ This publication relates that Governor Sir George Yeardley, Argall's successor, arriving in 1619, "at the end of this twelve yeares . . . found the Collony in this estate and thus furnished, vizt . . . in James Cittie were only those houses that Sir Thom. Gates built . . . with one wherein the Gov^r allways dwelt an addition being made thereto in the time of Captaine Sam^l Argall, and a church, built, wholly at the charge of the inhabitants of that cittie, of Timber, beinge fifty foote in length and twenty foote in breadth."²⁴

¹⁹ *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (Glasgow, 1905), XIX, 56.

²⁰ Brown, *First Republic in America*, 150.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 253.

²² Brown, *First Republic in America*, 308.

²³ *Colonial Records of Virginia*, 67.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

This frame church, probably completed in 1617, was the fourth church built at Jamestown. It was immortalized, only two years later, as the meeting-place of the first popular representative legislature in the New World, the Grand Assembly of 1619. It is stated in the proceedings of this assembly that "the most convenient place we could find to sitt in was the Quire of the Church Where Sir George Yeardley, the Governour, being sett down in his accustomed place, those of the Counsel of Estate sate nexte him on both handes, excepting onely the Secretary then appointed Speaker, who sate right before him. . . . But forasmuche as men's affairs doe little prosper where God's service is neglected, all the Burgesses tooke their places in the Quire till a prayer was said by Mr. Bucke, the Minister, that it would please God to guide and sanctifie all our proceedings to his owne glory and to the good of this Plantation."²⁵ The fourth church seems to have been repaired in 1624, when Thomas Alnet, for defaming its minister, the Rev. David Sandys, was fined one hundred pounds of tobacco "towards reparacons of the Church in James Citye."²⁶

The minutes of the General Court of the Virginia colony contain definite evidence that the next church erected for James City Parish was not located on Jamestown Island, but was built on the opposite shore of the river, in 1628, as a chapel of ease for the first settlers near Hog Island. Since this early church lay in what later became Surry County, its story will be reserved for the ensuing chapter on the churches of that section.

After more than twenty years of service, Argall's church at James City was succeeded by the fifth Jamestown Church, a brick structure built during Governor Sir John Harvey's second administration, about 1639. The principal evidence for this date is a letter from Governor Harvey and the Council in Virginia to the Privy Council in London, dated 8th January 1638/9, in which it is stated: "Such hath bene our Indeavour herein that out of our owne purses wee have Largely contributed to the building of a brick church, and both masters of shippes and others of the ablest Planters have liberally by our p'suasion underwritten to this work."²⁷

That this church had long been projected is evident from a statement in the "Breife Declaration" that, at Jamestown, prior to Sir

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁶ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XIX, 238.

²⁷ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, III, 30.

Thomas Gates' time, "those buildings that weare erected coulde not . . . stand above five yeares and that not without continuall reparations; true it is that there was a Bricke Church intended to be built, but not soe much as the foundation thereof finished, but we contentinge ourselves with a church of wood answerable to those houses."²⁸ The subscription of funds toward the erection of this brick church, if not its actual construction, had begun by 1636, when William Beard of London, in a will dated the 20th December in that year, left "to a new church at James Cittie in Virginia, 500 waight of tobacco."²⁹

Confirmation of Governor Harvey's statement that the building of a new church at Jamestown had been undertaken at this period is found in an act of assembly, dated 6th January, 1639/40, creating Lawne's Creek Parish in what is now Surry County. This statute permits the remaining constituents of James City Parish on the south side of James River to employ a minister at their own expense, provided "that they pay as full and ample contribution to the building of the church at James City as the rest of the parish of James City shall be rated to pay."³⁰

A subsequent enactment of 1647, setting up Southwark Parish in what later became Surry County, has been interpreted as proving that the brick church at Jamestown was not completed until that year. This conclusion is based upon the wording of the act, which requires the members of the new parish to "pay and satisfy unto the minister of James Cittie all customary tithes and dues and all rates and taxes allready assessed for and toward the finishing and reparation of the church at Ja. Cittie."³¹ It seems more reasonable to construe this clause as retroactive, in its application to past taxes for the finishing of the brick church, from which taxes delinquent James City parishioners were not to be exempted by the creation of the new parish. Since the act shows that taxes for the repair of the church had already been assessed, it seems evident that it must have been in service for several years before 1647, or repairs would not have become necessary.

A further indication that a new church at Jamestown was either built or building during the decade preceding 1647 is found in notes

²⁸ *Colonial Records of Virginia*, 75.

²⁹ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XI, 148.

³⁰ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), IV, 158.

³¹ Henning, *Statutes at Large*, I, 347.

made by the late Mr. Conway Robinson from the general court records of colonial Virginia, prior to their destruction during the burning of Richmond in 1865. These notes include four references to litigation "concerning the building of a church at James city," dated from 1642 to 1644.

The brick church was burned in 1676 by Nathaniel Bacon, when he set fire to Jamestown as a military measure in his campaign against Governor Berkeley. It seems likely that only its interior woodwork and roof were destroyed by the conflagration, and that the massive walls were relatively unharmed, thus permitting it to be rebuilt readily. This is borne out by the limited appropriation, of only 14,000 pounds of tobacco, made by the colonial government in June, 1680, for the church's rehabilitation, indicating repair rather than complete reconstruction.³²

Following the transfer of the colonial government to Williamsburg in 1699, this rebuilt edifice served as a country parish church until about 1758, when it was closed.³³ Except for the existing tower, the church had fallen into complete ruin by the end of the eighteenth century, after which bricks from its prostrate walls were used to enclose the Ambler and Ludwell-Lee family tombstones with a graveyard wall, much of which is still standing. A bequest of money for this purpose was made in the will of Mr. William Ludwell Lee of Greenspring, who died 24th January, 1803,³⁴ and the work was performed under the supervision of Mr. John Ambler of Jamestown.

Excavation of the site of the brick church of 1639, just east of the existing brick tower ruin, was carried out in 1901, with the aid of Mr. John Tyler, Jr., by the Jamestown Committee of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, owners of the historic property. This committee's original findings were confirmed and extended by further excavation in 1902 and 1906. The foundation, first completely unearthed through the Association's efforts, revealed that this fifth Jamestown Church was of Gothic design, with massive buttressed walls, thirty-two inches, or 3½ brick lengths, in thickness. It was rectangular in form, about fifty feet seven inches by twenty-two feet eight inches, inside, or fifty-six by twenty-eight feet, outside, with its long axis placed approximately east and west, in accordance with ecclesiastical law.

³² McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses, 1659/60-1693*, 151.

³³ Goodwin, *Record of Bruton Church*, 6.

³⁴ Lee, *Lee of Virginia, 1642-1892*, 253-4.

Within the massive substructure of the church of 1639 was found a slender brick foundation, a single brick length thick, resting upon a cobblestone footing about one foot in breadth, evidently representing the underpinning for a frame church. This foundation had an inside width of nearly twenty feet, and extended to the western end of the brick church, but the eastern portion and both of its end walls were missing, leaving the exact length indeterminate.

During excavation of the eastern end of the brick church's foundation there were uncovered, at different levels, two chancel pavements, each of square brick tiles laid in a bed of mortar. These two tiled chancels were separated by a layer, eighteen inches deep, of dirt mixed with broken bricks and tiles and bits of blackened plaster, charred wood and discolored glass, all evidently the debris from a burned building. The upper chancel extended only five feet six inches from the east wall of the brick church and was bounded by a low brick wall along its western edge, but the lower chancel projected four feet six inches further west into the body of the church. Only the central portion of the latter remained and very few of its tiles were in place, but their impressions in the mortar were visible over a wide area. The tiles in the two chancels differed in size, the dimensions of the upper ones being $8\frac{1}{2}$ by $8\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches, and of the lower, 7 by 7 by 2 inches.

Two feet beneath the lower chancel, the excavators found a row of ten burials, side by side, occupying the full width between the brick church's walls, and two feet lower still, a similar row of ten burials, more closely spaced and lying within the width of the earlier foundation. At least one of the lower tier of burials projected eighteen inches under the east wall of the brick church's foundation, near its southeast corner, indicating that the church of the cobblestone foundation extended further east than the brick church, and hence was of earlier construction. This fact also suggests that the older church was at least eighteen inches longer than the later one, or not less than fifty-two feet, inside.

The presence of still lower graves, one to three tiers deep, beneath the regularly spaced chancel burials, is not mentioned in the reports, but is vouched for by one of the excavating committee, and indicates that the church site was formerly part of the extensive burying ground made necessary by the terrible mortality during the colony's first ten years. The same informant is of the opinion that some of the graves in the chancel had been previously entered and rifled,

not once but several times, which would account for the absence of relics of historical value.

Since the cobblestone foundation manifestly antedates that of the brick church of 1639, it appears probable that it belonged to the timber church believed to have been built by Governor Argall about 1617, with whose published dimensions it agrees closely, in width at least. The apparent discrepancy in length seems inconclusive, since the size given in the "Breife Declaration" for Argall's church, fifty by twenty feet, is apparently in "round figures," and if so, was not intended to be exact. Since there is no record of this church's having been burned, it seems evident that the charred debris, found above the lower chancel, resulted from the burning of the brick church by Bacon in 1676, and that the upper chancel pavement must have been laid when the church was repaired, about 1680.

If these conclusions are valid, it follows that the lower tile pavement must have formed the chancel of both the frame church of 1617 and the brick church of 1639. In support of this hypothesis, it is pointed out that both rows of burials lie below this lower chancel, which would have been completely destroyed had burials been made through it from the upper chancel, over the entire width of the church. Furthermore, a greater width than that of the earlier building was apparently adopted for the brick church in order that its side walls, at least, might be erected while the older church was still in service. Under such conditions, there would have been no occasion for discarding and replacing the existing chancel pavement. Finally, since the natural ground level rises, from year to year, through formation of new soil, it is possible that a new chancel pavement, laid over the fire's debris in 1680, would then have been more nearly at the outside ground level than the earlier tiling.

It was also found that the nave or body of the church was paved with brick, beneath which burials had been made, although not as regularly placed as in the chancel. This pavement appears to have been laid when the church was repaired in 1680, since it extends above, but not below, the charred debris from the fire. A tiled walk leading from the west end of the church to the chancel doorway or minister's entrance, near the east end of the south wall, was also discovered, but the five-inch-square tiles composing it were stolen from the grounds and sold. Lead "comes" or rounded strips grooved on both sides, evidently divisions in diamond-paned windows, as well as fragments of once clear, thin glass, were found among the burned

remains of the brick church's woodwork, showing that its windows were of that type of construction.

The existing ruined brick tower may have formed a part of the brick church of 1639, since the underground portions of both buildings are continuous. The design of the tower is unusual, in that the front end wall of the church was returned on itself to make the rear wall of the tower, which thus formed a separate structure, only joined to the church, above ground, at the sides and top of the connecting doorways.

A general irregularity of surface, with a complete absence of raked mortar joints, is noticeable in the east wall of the tower. This indicates that, in the construction of the brick church, the tower was the last part undertaken, since the proximity of an existing church wall would have prevented the proper finishing of the brickwork in question. It therefore seems only logical to conclude that the tower was added after the completion of the church, of which it would certainly have been made an integral part, if both tower and church had been built at the same time.

The tower ruin is about eighteen feet square, outside, and has walls three feet in thickness at the base, reduced by offsets on the inside, at each story, to about seventeen inches at the top. Its original height has been estimated at about forty-six feet, to the peak of its pointed roof,³⁵ assuming that this was originally similar in type to that of the Old Brick Church in Isle of Wight County, a contemporary structure of similar design, although this is far from certain.

The brickwork of the tower ruin is laid in English bond, with random glazed headers, except for a projecting belt, of two courses of bricks laid in Flemish bond, which extends completely around the building above the original top of the doorways, at the second floor level. This belt has the Flemish bond's decorative pattern set off by glazed headers, as in other colonial buildings with that type of brickwork.

The front and rear walls of the tower each had, originally, a central doorway, at ground level, and directly above these, in the second story, there were a front window and a rear doorway, the latter probably leading to a gallery in the church. All of these openings were circular-headed, with plain arches one brick length in depth, having glazed headers alternating with common bricks, around the outside. These arches have brick imposts projecting into the opening,

³⁵ Yonge, *Site of Old James Towne*, 73.

a primitive feature found on no other colonial church in Virginia except the contemporary Old Brick Church in Isle of Wight. Above the lower doorways, these arches have fallen, throwing upper and lower openings together to form lofty portals, nearly twenty feet high, at front and rear.

The third story, probably used as a belfry, was ventilated by six slotted openings, two of which were cut in each of the front and side walls. It has been suggested that these were loopholes for musketry fire, presumably for defense against the Indians, and that their presence tends to confirm the tower's construction at about the date generally accepted for the church, since the Indian War of 1644 left little danger of further Indian attack. Whatever the purpose of these openings, nothing conclusive as to the antiquity of the tower can be deduced from their presence, since closely similar "loopholes" were provided in the foundation of at least one eighteenth century structure, the mansion at Carter's Grove, presumably for the purpose of ventilation.

It was believed by Bishop Meade that the tower belonged to a church built after the fire of 1676 to replace the original frame church on the site, now considered to have been built by Governor Argall in 1617. The bishop's view of the church itself now seems untenable, in the light of records pointing to the construction of a new brick church in 1639-44 and to its restoration to service after the fire, much sooner than its complete reconstruction would have permitted.

In regard to the tower, the only known documentary references are all in favor of its having been built as an addition to the old church after its restoration to service in 1680. The most important of these references is found in a petition by the churchwardens of James City Parish, dated 17th May, 1699, "praying allowance from the Publick to help towards defraying the Charge of building a steeple &c repairing Walls and pews of the said Church," which was rejected by the House of Burgesses.³⁶ This might be interpreted as referring to the addition of a wooden superstructure above an existing brick tower, but it is noteworthy that the earliest published reference to the existence of a tower on the brick church at Jamestown seems to be in Francis Louis Michel's journal of 1702, just three years later than the above mention of a steeple's construction. In this journal, Michel speaks of "churches—of which I have seen three,

³⁶ McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses, 1695-1702*, 166.

built of bricks, especially at Jamestown, where the church has a tower and a bell."³⁷

It is evident that the tower, whatever its age, once had a wooden spire above it, for Bishop Meade records "the testimony of an elderly gentleman who assured me that he was present when the wooden part of the tower was burned by accident."³⁸ This account is supported by the modern discovery of charred timber ends in the joist holes of the tower, conclusively proving that the latter had been burned since the church was replaced in service in 1680.

The evidence offered by the architectural features of the tower is either indefinite or else seems in favor of the later date of construction. The use of English-bond brickwork is inconclusive as evidence of the tower's age, since it was probably adopted to conform either with the older part of the church or with the prevailing fashion. If the latter was the case, it is noteworthy that the Wren Building at William and Mary College, built in 1695, has English-bond brickwork, and that the only other surviving colonial churches in Virginia having brickwork in English bond were all built within two decades after 1699, the date recorded for the building of the Jamestown steeple.

These churches are St. Peter's (1703) in New Kent, Yeocomico (1706) in Westmoreland, and the Lower Chapel (1717) in Middlesex. It is perhaps significant that the walls of the first two churches mentioned are marked by the same combination of Flemish and English bonds that is found in the Jamestown tower's brickwork.

The historic church tower ruin is sometimes credited with an even greater antiquity than is justified by its acceptance as a part of the church of 1639. Such claims appear to be based upon an old woodcut, which has attained currency as a picture of Jamestown in 1622 and shows a scene from the massacre of that year, with a palisaded village in the clouds of the background. This woodcut was published in Holland, about 1707, as an illustration in a pamphlet reprinting "The Ship's Log," written by Capt. Anthony Chester in the year of the massacre.³⁹ The fortified village in the picture is presumably Jamestown, and a church tower shown in its center has been assumed to represent the existing brick tower, although nothing is said in the text to justify either conclusion. This woodcut appears to be

³⁷ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XXIV, 22.

³⁸ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 113.

³⁹ Yonge, *Site of Old James Towne*, 102.

an elaborated version of one published by de Bry in 1634, of which the editors of *The Pageant of America* say: "Where de Bry derived his ideas either for the massacre or the village is not stated, but his eccentricities were such that, without this knowledge, the authenticity of this sketch must be questioned."⁴⁰ Since all the earlier churches at Jamestown were undoubtedly frame buildings and the first brick house on the island was not built until 1638,⁴¹ it does not seem credible that the tower could have antedated the brick church of 1639.

Twenty-three acres of land, including the historic church tower and graveyard, were given in 1893 by Mr. and Mrs. Edward E. Barney, then owners of the island, to the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, in whose care the reservation has ever since remained.⁴² The existing memorial church, designed as a restoration of the original building, was presented to the Association by the National Society of Colonial Dames in 1907, upon the three hundredth anniversary of the founding of Jamestown. The new structure appears to rest upon the brick church's foundation, but is actually carried by a system of steel beams and concrete piers, so as to place no weight upon the ancient brickwork, weakened by long contact with the damp ground.⁴³

With the shift of population away from the original settlement at Jamestown, attendance at the island church became inconvenient for most of James City's parishioners, and about 1750, a new parish church was built for this parish.⁴⁴ This church, a brick building, was located only two miles north of the historic Jamestown Church, but on the mainland, and hence was first called the Church on the Main, and later, the Main Church. It stood beside the oldest road from Williamsburg to Jamestown, a route which avoided the necessity of bridging Archer's Hope Creek (now College Creek) by passing around its head, and which became known, in late colonial times, as the Iron-bound Road. During the Revolution, on the 6th July, 1781, a sharp engagement took place at the Church on the Main, when Cornwallis, on his way to Portsmouth by way of Jamestown, was attacked by the Americans under Lafayette, and drove off his

⁴⁰ *Pageant of America*, I, 189.

⁴¹ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XI, 396.

⁴² Yonge, *Site of Old James Towne*, 66.

⁴³ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XXIV, 22.

⁴⁴ Tyler, *Cradle of the Republic*, 125.

assailants with considerable loss.⁴⁵ This engagement became known as the battle of Greenspring, after Governor Berkeley's former residence, situated two miles to the northwest.

According to Bishop Meade, writing in 1857, the Main Church had only recently disappeared, and when it was taken down, a piece of timber broke the arch of a brick vault containing a coffin inscribed "Elizabeth Bland," with a vacant space left for another coffin. This was evidently the wife of the Rev. William Bland, minister of James City Parish prior to 1791, when he moved to Norfolk.⁴⁶ The site of this old church is now marked only by a few broken bricks, two fine old black walnut trees and an immense sycamore. The adjoining farm has always been known as the Main Farm.

James City Parish was reduced from its original extent by the creation of Lawne's Creek Parish in 1639/40 and of Southwark Parish in 1647, the territory involved being cut off from James City County in 1652 to form the present county of Surry. A small parish named Harrop was formed from James City Parish on the mainland below Jamestown in 1645/6, and compensating additions of territory were made, early in the eighteenth century, when James City Parish was enlarged by annexation of parts of Wallingford and Wilmington Parishes. These changes will be discussed at greater length later in this volume.

Since the settlement of Virginia began at Jamestown, it was natural that the earliest plantation parishes should have sprung up nearby. The first such parish in the original James City County, other than the parent parish formed by the Jamestown settlement, may have been at the pioneer plantation of Smith's Hundred. This was founded about 1618 by the Society of Smith's Hundred, and is mentioned in the records of the Virginia Company of London as "the first [plantation] of any moment" to be set up at private expense in Virginia.⁴⁷ It was represented at the historic first Grand Assembly, held in the fourth church at Jamestown in 1619.⁴⁸ Originally named for Sir Thomas Smith,⁴⁹ first governor of the London Company, this settlement was renamed Southampton Hundred in 1620, in honor

⁴⁵ Tyler, *History of Virginia*, II, 220.

⁴⁶ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 113.

⁴⁷ *Virginia Historical Collections*, VII, 65.

⁴⁸ *Colonial Records of Virginia*, 10.

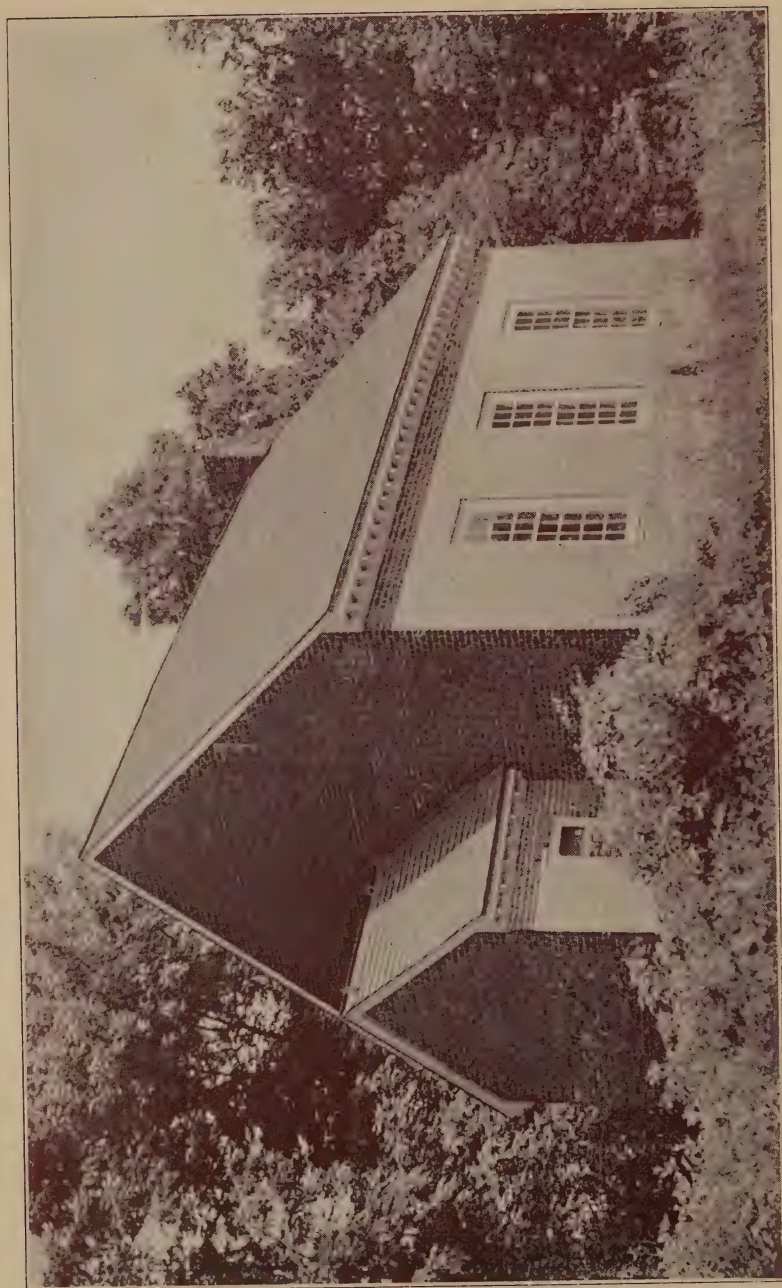
⁴⁹ Brown, *First Republic in America*, 275.

⁵⁰ *Virginia Historical Collections*, VII, 62.



PLATE 3

Memorial church at Jamestown.



Hickory Neck Church.

of the Earl of Southampton, Smith's successor.⁵⁰ It seems to have been practically wiped out in the Indian Massacre of 1622, since it is not mentioned in the census of 1623.⁵¹

Smith's Hundred is usually considered to have been founded in Charles City County, the society's lands including 100,000 acres between Weyanoke and the mouth of the Chickahominy River in 1628,⁵² but the location recorded for the first settlement and hence, almost certainly, for the church, was at Dancing Point, just west of the Chickahominy, in a section included in James City County for a century afterward. The church at Smith's Hundred, probably a simple wooden structure, was founded by Mrs. Mary Robinson of London, whose will, dated 23rd February, 1617/18, gave £200 "toward the helpe of the poor people in Virginia, towards the building of a church and reduceinge them to the knowledge of God's word."⁵³ The communion silver service, the gift of an unknown person to this church, which is called "St. Mary's church in Smith's Hundred" in the inscription on the cup, was taken to Jamestown, after the massacre, by Governor Yeardley, who had been commander of this Hundred. Following his death, it was delivered to the court at James City in 1628 by his widow, and later given to the parish church of Elizabeth City on Hampton River, also named for the Earl of Southampton. It is still in use there, at St. John's Church, Hampton, as the English church silver in longest use in America, bearing a London date letter for 1618/19.⁵⁴

The next earliest known parish, aside from James City itself, within the present bounds of James City County, appears to have been Martin's Hundred, which was, at first, simply the settlement of that name. Like Smith's Hundred, it was founded by a group of private adventurers, the Society of Martin's Hundred, named for Richard Martin, attorney for the Virginia Company of London.⁵⁵ The plantation of Martin's Hundred originally included 80,000 acres of land.⁵⁶ It was founded in 1618, and was represented in the first Grand Assembly, held in the following year. Seventy-eight people were killed there in the Indian massacre of 1622,⁵⁷ but the settlement was

⁵¹ *Colonial Records of Virginia*, 37.

⁵² *Virginia Historical Magazine*, IV, 378.

⁵³ Brown, *First Republic in America*, 275.

⁵⁴ From information posted in St. John's Church, Hampton.

⁵⁵ Brown, *First Republic in America*, 275.

⁵⁶ *Colonial Records of Virginia*, 48.

⁵⁷ *Colonial Records of Virginia*, 65.

not abandoned. It continued to send representatives to the General Assembly until counties were formed in 1634.⁵⁸

That there was a church in Martin's Hundred Parish at the time of the massacre, if not earlier, is proved by a letter written by Richard Frethorne, one of the settlers, in 1623, stating that, after the Indian attack of the previous year, "of all their houses there is but two left and a peece of a church."⁵⁹ This ruined or partly finished church was rebuilt by 1638, as is evident from a land grant, dated 10th October in that year, to David Monsell for 250 acres, bounded "West upon land of Thos. Loveing in Martin's Hundred, north by a ridge of land whereon the Church standeth, . . . and south upon Keith's Creek."⁶⁰ The site of this early church is known and lies near a grove of large old oak and walnut trees, at the edge of a field on the north side of a dirt road leading south from U. S. Route 60, about three fourths of a mile west of Skiff's Creek (originally Keith's Creek) reservoir. Bishop Meade was able to locate the site by the presence of a tombstone recording the burial of Dr. Samuel Pond of Martin's Hundred Parish in 1694,⁶¹ and this stone is still there.

It seems evident from the action of the colonial council in approving the union of "Merchants' Hundred Parish" with Yorkhampton Parish in 1712,⁶² that Martin's Hundred Parish ceased its separate existence in that year. This parish is also called "Merchants' Hundred" in "King" Carter's will of 1732, the error resulting from the fact that the word "merchant" was pronounced "marchant" in colonial times. A similar confusion of the two names is found in council records referring to Martin's Brandon Parish, on the opposite side of the James River, as "Merchants' Brandon."⁶³

The above conclusion is supported by the record of a proposal to enlarge Hampton Parish in 1699, which was disapproved by the House of Burgesses because of their stated resolve to unite this parish with Martin's Hundred.⁶⁴ It appears to be confirmed by the fact that Martin's Hundred is mentioned in two lists of the parishes in Virginia, made in 1680⁶⁵ and 1702,⁶⁶ but is not included in a similar

⁵⁸ Tyler, *Cradle of the Republic* (1906), 230.

⁵⁹ Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London, 1623-26*, IV, 41.

⁶⁰ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 106.

⁶¹ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 242.

⁶² McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council*, III, 316.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, IV, 237, 285.

⁶⁴ McIlwaine, *Legislative Journals of Council*, III, 1524.

⁶⁵ *Colonial Records of Virginia*, 103.

⁶⁶ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, I, 377.

report of 1714.⁶⁷ It is also noteworthy that such unions had been encouraged by a contemporary act of 1696, authorizing weak parishes to combine with others.⁶⁸

The impoverished state of Martin's Hundred is shown by the report of its churchwardens to the general court of Virginia in 1700, that the parish then had only ninety "tithables," or persons subject to tax, "no glebe, nor other gifts for pious use, only one silver bowle for a Communion Cupp . . . as alsoe a silver bason, given for the use of the p'ish to Cristen Children in."⁶⁹

The rapid progress of early settlement in James City County is reflected in an act of February, 1644/5, creating an additional parish in the section between Martin's Hundred and Jamestown. This act provides "by the consent of Mr. Thos. Hampton rector of James Citty parish, that the inhabitants of the east side of Archer's hope creeke to the head thereof, and down to Warehams ponds, should be a distinct parish of themselves," with the privilege of uniting with Martin's Hundred Parish, if they saw fit.⁷⁰ Archer's Hope Creek is now known as College Creek, and Wareham's Ponds have been identified with two former ponds west of Carter's Grove plantation, at the head of a small stream still known as Werrum's Run. This new parish was named Harrop by an act of March, 1645/6,⁷¹ after the plantation of that name, originally patented by Dr. John Pott in 1631, and a church was probably built for it, but we have no record of its existence or site. Harrop was combined with Middle Plantation Parish, to form the new parish of Middletown, lying in both York and James City Counties, by act of assembly of 1st April, 1658,⁷² and Middletown, in 1674, was united with Marston Parish in York County to form Bruton Parish.⁷³ The later history of Bruton Parish and of its colonial churches will be traced in another chapter.⁷⁴

Another early parish in James City County, represented by several burgesses in the Grand Assembly of 1639, was Chickahominy Parish.⁷⁵ Originally located west of Jamestown at the mouth of the

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 13.

⁶⁸ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 298.

⁶⁹ *Calendar of State Papers*, I, 72.

⁷⁰ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 298.

⁷¹ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 317.

⁷² *Ibid.*, I, 498.

⁷³ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), III, 170.

⁷⁴ See page 235.

⁷⁵ McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses, 1619-1659/60*, xv.

Chickahominy River, the parish had its name changed to Wallingford in 1642/3⁷⁶ and its area increased to include all of James City County west of the Chickahominy,⁷⁷ as well as considerable territory east of it. Wallingford is included in the Virginia parish lists for 1680, 1702 and 1714, quoted above. It was dissolved in 1720, when its entire area west of Chickahominy River was annexed to Charles City County as a part of Westover Parish, while the remaining portion, being "too small to continue a distinct parish of itself," was united with James City Parish.⁷⁸ This enactment appears to have been prompted by the petition of citizens of Charles City County to the Assembly, about 1710, that the part of James City County above the Chickahominy be annexed to Charles City, and that this river be made the boundary between the two counties.⁷⁹ Annexation of this territory may also have been hastened by the dissatisfaction of its residents, who had vainly protested in 1715 against the removal to Williamsburg of the county court-house, having even offered to build one more convenient (to themselves, at least) at their own expense.⁸⁰

Since Wallingford's parishioners east of the Chickahominy had already petitioned in 1699 for union with James City Parish, complaining of their own parish's inconvenient situation and division, it is evident that Wallingford Parish Church was located west of the Chickahominy, where lay the main part of the parish.⁸¹ This is confirmed by a report made in 1724 to the Bishop of London by the Reverend Peter Fontaine, Rector of Westover Parish, who mentions Wallingford Church as the Lower Church of Westover, which had recently absorbed Wallingford Parish west of the Chickahominy River.⁸² The site of this ancient church has recently been discovered by the author and its remains are fully described in the chapter on the colonial churches of Charles City County.

Adjoining Wallingford on the northwest was the parish of Wilmington, which extended along both sides of the Chickahominy, in James City County, to the county's upper limit. No enactment for its creation appears to be recorded, but the earliest published refer-

⁷⁶ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 249.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 278.

⁷⁸ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVIII, 106.

⁷⁹ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XVIII, 399.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, X, 275.

⁸¹ McIlwaine, *Legislative Journals of Council*, I, 260.

⁸² Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 278.

ence to its existence seems to be in a General Court order of 1st April, 1658, where it is mentioned as the Upper Parish of the Chickahominy.⁸³ Since this order was prompted by the protest of Captain Bennett Freeman against his house being included in this Upper Parish rather than in Wallingford Parish, it seems likely that it was issued soon after the formation of Wilmington Parish, as an adjustment of the boundary laid down at its establishment. It is probable that Wilmington Parish was formed out of the upper part of Wallingford Parish, by order of the James City County Court, in accordance with the Act of 1655/6, authorizing such courts to subdivide the counties into parishes.⁸⁴

Wilmington Parish is included, as a parish of James City County, in all three of the Virginia parish lists of 1680, 1702 and 1714. Its minister reported to the Bishop of London, in 1724, that his parish was then thirty miles long by nine miles wide, and had three churches in it.⁸⁵ In consequence of its excessive length and inconvenient location on both sides of the river, Wilmington Parish was dissolved by act of assembly effective 1st March, 1724/5, and its territory west of the Chickahominy was annexed to Westover Parish in Charles City County. On the present James City side of the river, Wilmington's upper area was divided between the neighboring New Kent County parishes of St. Peter's and Blisland while its lower end was united to James City Parish.⁸⁶

Since the inhabitants of Wilmington's uppermost section, soon after its union with St. Peter's, petitioned unsuccessfully for a chapel of ease,⁸⁷ it seems evident that this section contained no house of worship. An entry of 1733 in the Blisland Parish vestry book authorizing the church wardens to "demand the Church plate which belonged to the Uper Church of the late parish of Wilmington"⁸⁸ makes it clear that this Upper Church lay in the middle section of Wilmington Parish, which had been annexed to Blisland, but its site has not been located.

A land grant of 1695 to Alexander Young for 180 acres "near Wilmington lower church"⁸⁹ confirms the existence of a lower church in this parish, and it seems only reasonable to suppose that it stood

⁸³ McIlwaine, *Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1619-1659/60*, 109.

⁸⁴ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 469.

⁸⁵ Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 278.

⁸⁶ Chamberlayne, *Vestry Book of Blisland Parish*, xxix.

⁸⁷ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), XXII, 55.

⁸⁸ Chamberlayne, *Vestry Book of Blisland Parish*, 50.

⁸⁹ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), XII, 110.

in Wilmington's lower end, which became part of James City Parish. There is no record of Wilmington Parish's third church building, whose existence was reported in 1724, but it was probably a chapel of ease for the section of the parish which became part of Charles City County in 1720. It seems likely that it stood near the south side of the Chickahominy, on the colonial plantation of Mount Sterling, still known by that name, where indications of an ancient churchyard may represent its site.

The above-mentioned "Wilmington lower church" seems to have been the predecessor, on the same site, of the old brick building known as Chickahominy Church, which formerly stood at a country cross-roads two miles south of Toano.⁹⁰ Chickahominy Church is believed to have been built, about 1750, as the new Upper Church of James City Parish. It appears to have survived until sometime after the Civil War, and then burned; its ruins remained standing for a dozen years afterward. A frame church, still known by the old church's name, has been erected near its site by a colored Baptist congregation and one of its deacons remembers playing, as a boy, within the empty walls of the ancient brick building. Traces of the old church's foundation are evident at the site, and one of its brick footings was encountered when recent graves were dug. A tombstone dated early in the last century still remains in the old churchyard.

A historical highway marker at Toano, by the road leading to the site, states that Chickahominy Church was used as a hospital during the Revolutionary War.⁹¹ This statement appears to have been based upon the published journal of Capt. John Davis of the American army, but the context shows that his company merely "lay at this church, dressing and sending our wounded to Hospital" at nearby Bird's Ordinary,⁹² following the battle of Greenspring.

The parish of Blisland, already mentioned as having acquired territory in James City County, through the dissolution and division of Wilmington Parish in 1725, was previously located entirely within New Kent County. It is believed to have been formed in 1653 or earlier,⁹³ as a very large parish coterminous with the original New Kent County as created in 1654, but its area was reduced, with that of the county, by the successive cutting-off of the various parishes

⁹⁰ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 200.

⁹¹ *State Historical Markers of Virginia* (1941), 126.

⁹² *Virginia Historical Magazine*, I, 5.

⁹³ Chamberlayne, *Vestry Book of Blisland Parish*, x.

included in the present counties of King and Queen, King William and Hanover.⁹⁴

The formation of St. Peter's Parish in 1678/9 left Blisland with about half of the area of the existing New Kent County. After the addition of the middle section of Wilmington Parish to Blisland in 1725, the latter parish had the remainder of its lower section placed in James City County by the revision of the James City-New Kent County line in 1766. The same change in boundaries also put the former upper section of Wilmington Parish, annexed to St. Peter's Parish in 1725, into New Kent County, leaving St. Peter's without any James City territory.⁹⁵

Blisland Parish is of interest in connection with the churches described in this chapter, chiefly because its vestry book and last surviving church building are the only ones extant for colonial James City County. This church building is the existing Hickory Neck Church, which stands on the east side of U. S. Route 60, about a mile north of Toano.

Although no colonial record has been found, referring to Hickory Neck Church by that name, the old church's quaint title appears to have a colonial origin. This is suggested by an advertisement in the Virginia Gazette of 1st April, 1766, by Alexander Purdie, offering for sale "A Tract of land in New Kent county, known by the name of Hickory Neck containing 400 acres . . . within a quarter of a mile of church and mill." Although no location is given for the land advertised, the existing church's site lay in New Kent County until November in the same year, when it became part of James City County. It seems highly improbable, then, that the church so closely adjoining Hickory Neck plantation could have been any other than the one bearing the same name.

The greater part of the present Hickory Neck Church consists of a brick wing ordered, on 29th November, 1773, to be added to the Lower Church of Blisland Parish.⁹⁶ The vestry book shows that on 31st October, 1733, this Lower Church was ordered to be built of brick, sixty feet long and twenty-six feet wide, inside, "the further dimensions to be as the Vestry Shall agree with the workmen."⁹⁷ The size of the addition is not specified, but the dimensions of the present

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, xxviii.

⁹⁵ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, VIII, 208.

⁹⁶ Chamberlayne, *Vestry Book of Blisland Parish*, 50.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 197.

building, as checked with the foundation of the original church, show that the wing extended twenty-five feet six inches from the church's north side, and had an inside width of twenty-five feet, with its east wall six feet from the east end of the older building. The vestry book also records an order of 17th December, 1742, "that a [Church]Yard be laid off at the Lower Church and bricked in."⁹⁸ There is no indication in the record that the Lower Church ordered in 1733 occupied the site of any previous church building, although there had been an earlier Lower Church of Blisland Parish, according to the vestry book.

This enlarged last Lower Church of Blisland Parish fell into disuse soon after the close of the vestry book in 1786 and was later abandoned, like many other colonial churches of that period. The main part of the church, being forty years older than the rest, was the first to fall into ruin, and was finally pulled down and its bricks used to close the south end of the wing, thus forming the present small building. Judging from the bond of the brickwork, which is distinctive of the period from 1820 to 1840, this south wall was built and the church restored, during the first decade of that period.

This is confirmed by a record showing that "the trustees of the Hickory Neck School Society in the county of James City" were constituted a corporate body by the General Assembly in 1825 for the purpose of converting the Hickory Neck Church into a school and then managing the affairs of the school. The act of incorporation shows that glebe lands belonging to Blisland Parish in James City County had been sold in conformity with the "act concerning the glebe lands and churches within this Commonwealth" and that there was a fund due to that part of the parish lying in James City. The authorities controlling this fund had consented to one thousand dollars of it being applied in aid of the fund for primary schools, confining its use to the inhabitants of that section of the county, and to a sufficient sum, three hundred and fifty dollars, of the residue of this fund being appropriated "to repair a part of the building formerly called Hickory Neck Church" for use as a school house.⁹⁹ A report made to the Diocesan Convention of 1834 by the rector of Bruton Parish shows that religious services had been held once a month, on Sundays, in the old church, for several years after its

⁹⁸ Chamberlayne, *Vestry Book of Blisland Parish*, 83.

⁹⁹ *Acts of General Assembly*, 1825, 78-80.

reconstruction as a school building, but were apparently discontinued after that date.¹⁰⁰ Hickory Neck Academy, upon the completion of Toano High School in 1907, was restored to its original purpose, through the efforts of the Rev. E. Ruffin Jones, then rector of Bruton Church,¹⁰¹ and services are still held within its walls.

¹⁰⁰ Hawks, *Convention Journals of Diocese of Virginia*, 306.

¹⁰¹ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), I, 147.

CHAPTER II.

Surry and Sussex County Churches

ALL THE COLONIAL churches of Surry and Sussex Counties, Virginia, have long since passed away, with the exception of one, which survives only as a picturesque ruin. Most of the two counties' parish records have also disappeared, but a complete vestry book and register have been preserved for the latest of their colonial parishes. Fortunately for our knowledge of these vanished churches, the archives of both counties extend back to the date of establishment, and, in addition to being complete, are exceptionally legible and well-preserved.

By proclamation of Governor Argall in 1619, the earliest recorded limits of Jamestown, both as corporation and parish, included the southern shore of the James River from Hog Island to the Four Mile Tree.¹ The landmark last mentioned, doubtless a giant tree of the primeval forest, standing on the river bank four miles above Jamestown, gave its name to the colonial Surry plantation of Four Mile Tree, whose ancient mansion house still exists.²

In the above proclamation, this southern shore, now included in Surry County, is mentioned as being "usually called by the name of Tappahannock," and in a report on the state of the Virginia colony when it was returned to the Crown in 1625, this same area is listed as "The Territory of Tappahannock over against James Cittie".³ This name was derived from the Quioughcohanock Indians, whose tribal lands bordered the river on the south.

It has been aptly suggested that the Jamestown colony seemed to the early settlers a "miniature London", and that, as the southern part of London lay across the Thames River in the English county of Surrey, the colonists came to speak of the southern shore of the James as "over on the Surrey side". The name of Surry County, Virginia, simplified by dropping the "e", seems to have arisen from this manner of speech, and it appears equally probable that the Surry parish opposite James City was called Southwark after the English parish of that name, which lay across the Thames from London.⁴

¹ Brown, *First Republic in America*, 287.

² *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XVI, 222.

³ Brown, *First Republic in America*, 621.

⁴ Bohannon, *Old Surry*, 8.





PLATE 6

Site of second Southwark Church.

Surry County was formed, about the middle of the seventeenth century, out of James City County's territory south of James River. No legislative enactment creating the new county has been found, but recorded grants of certain lands now in Surry show that they were still in James City County as late as December, 1651. It therefore seems probable that Surry County was created by the assembly of April, 1652, since its first justices were appointed in that month, according to the county records, and its first representatives were seated in the assembly of November in the same year.⁵

As thus established, Surry County was definitely bounded on the north and east by the original shires of Charles City, James City and Isle of Wight, and on the south by the province of North Carolina, but, as in the case of other frontier counties, its extent to the westward was indeterminate. The first legislation defining Surry's western boundary was an act of 1720, which created Brunswick County out of an unnamed area lying south of the Nottoway River and extending westward to the pass of the Roanoke River in the Blue Ridge Mountains.⁶ Although Surry County is not mentioned in this act, there is reason to believe that all of the new county's enormous area, from which fully a dozen other counties later were formed, was derived from Surry's indefinite westward extension.

Brunswick County was not fully organized until 1733, because its southern boundary was first definitely established, by the running of the Virginia-North Carolina line, in that year.⁷ At this time it was enlarged by the addition of parts of Surry and Isle of Wight.⁸ The present limits of Surry County were attained in 1753, through the cutting off of most of its area south of the Blackwater River, to form the new county of Sussex.⁹

The earliest parishes in what is now Surry County were erected out of James City Parish, from which they were only gradually allowed complete independence. An enactment of January, 1639/40, created Lawne's Creek Parish as the first such organization within the limits of colonial Surry County. The boundaries given in this act reveal that this parish was originally of small extent, including only the territory between Lower Chippokes and Lawne's Creeks, from their

⁵ Robinson, *Virginia Counties*, 87.

⁶ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 77.

⁷ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council*, IV, 173.

⁸ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 355.

⁹ *Ibid.*, VI, 384.

headwaters down to the James River and the creek that divides Hog Island from the mainland.¹⁰

The same act permitted the inhabitants of Hog Island and the south side of James River, from Lower Chippokes to Sunken Marsh Creek, to maintain a minister of their own, because of their remoteness from the church of James City Parish, to which they still belonged. It was stipulated that they should pay "half duties to the parson of James City" and make "as full and ample contribution to the building of a church at James City as the rest of the parish of James City shall be rated to pay." These exactions proving burdensome, the latter part of this act was repealed in March, 1642/3, and the above territory, under the name of Chippoaks, was made an independent parish, "without any relation to the parish of James City."¹¹ No further documentary reference to Chippoaks Parish has come to light, and it seems probable that it soon was absorbed by the adjacent parish of Lawne's Creek.

Increasing settlement on the south side of the James was followed by a demand for more churches, and in November, 1647, upon the petition of the inhabitants, a parish named Southwark was established there, extending from College Run to Upper Chippokes Creek. The new parish was created by an act of assembly which required it to remain tributary to James City Parish, to the extent of "all customary tithes and dues" and of all past taxes toward the cost of Jamestown Church's completion and repairs, on which its members might be in arrears.¹² This claim was formally released, about two years later, as shown by the following record in the county's annals: "These are to Certifie that the agreement between the South Side of James Riv^r & this parish is that the s^d South Side shall pay unto the pish of James City for the yeare one thousand six hundred and fifty, tenn pounds of tobacco & one bushel of corn p head & for ever hereafter to remain a p^ticular pish by Themselves without any further paymt att all to this pish, witness my hand this 3rd January 1649 [1650], William Berkeley."¹³

Since all of the new parish's territory (except the three-mile stretch from Sunken Marsh Creek to Upper Chippokes Creek) had been included within the bounds set for Chippoaks Parish by the Act of 1643,

¹⁰ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), IV, 158.

¹¹ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 277.

¹² *Ibid.*, I, 347.

¹³ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), III, 125.

the creation of Southwark Parish in 1647 has been interpreted by some authorities as merely a change of name for the older parish of Chip-poaks. Analysis of the records quoted above shows this view to be erroneous.

If the independent parish of Chippoaks had still existed in 1647, it is not reasonable to suppose that its inhabitants would have petitioned for the creation of a new parish which should be so completely tributary to James City Parish as the new act provided. It seems more likely, therefore, that by 1647, Chippoaks Parish's separate existence had lapsed, and the most plausible explanation of its disappearance is that the infant parish of Chippoaks failed to become effectively organized and was absorbed by the adjoining parish of Lawne's Creek.

It seems evident that the original bounds of Surry's two parishes were gradually enlarged to keep pace with the county's settlement, but no reduction in their extent took place until the formation of Brunswick County in 1720 and the inclusion of its entire area in the new parish of St. Andrew's.¹⁴ Contemporary reports by the ministers of Southwark and Lawne's Creek state that their parishes were settled for 100 and 120 miles of their respective lengths.¹⁵ This is evidence that the new county and parish were considered as originally part of Surry's territory, since these lengths would have extended 60 miles into Brunswick, probably as far as it was settled at that date.

In recognition of the excessive length of the Surry parishes, even after their curtailment by the creation of St. Andrew's Parish in Brunswick County, a new parish called Albemarle was erected out of the entire width of Surry County below the Blackwater River by an act effective 1st January, 1738/9.¹⁶ By this act the remaining area of the county was placed in the parish of Southwark, thus bringing to a close the existence of Lawne's Creek Parish. It was finally enacted, effective 1st February, 1753/4, that the new county of Sussex should be formed out of the greater part of Albemarle Parish, the remainder of whose area was added to Southwark.¹⁷

The first mention of the construction of a church within the territory which later became Surry County is found in the minutes of the council and general court of the colony, under date of October, 1628. This record is as follows: "John Day sworne and exa'ied [examined]

¹⁴ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 77.

¹⁵ Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 289, 306.

¹⁶ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, V, 75.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, VI, 384.

sayth That hee heard Richard Tree say that there was no hast[e] of building the Church it being planting tyme and therefore hee would deferre it till a further tyme. Thomas Plomer sworne and exai'd sayth that Rich: Tree did work uppon the Church at Hogg Island a weeke or fortnight, as he verylie thinketh after Mr Uty came home from the generall assembly. Andrew Roe sworne and exai'd sayth that about the beginning of August last hee saw certain severall parcells of dub'd boards Ly at the Church at Hogg Iland and that since that time hee hath seene the said Tree and his servants fetch boards from thence. ffor as much as it appears to the Co^{rt} that Rich: Tree hath neglected the building of the Church at Hog Island contrary to his Covennt whereby he should forfeit one thousand pounds of tobaccoe; it is ordered that the said Tree shall before the 20th of December next finish the said Church and the inhabitants to bring the tymber necessary for the finishing of the work to the place where the Church is to be built by the last of this p'sent October, and shall find him nayles sufficient for the said work, And if the said Tree shall neglect to finish the same according to this order hee shall forfeit the some of 1000 lb of tobaccoe And the worke to be done by the said Tree without any consideracon to bee paid him therefore in regard of his neglect."¹⁸

This court order indicates that a church was being built at Hog Island in 1628 and that it was completed by the end of that year. It appears to have been a frame building, with hand-hewn timbers, and it probably had a brick foundation. Since no parish had yet been organized on the south side of the river, it is clear that this church was built as a chapel of ease of James City Parish, for the convenience of settlers in that remote section. Although no further record of its existence has been found, it seems altogether probable that this building, erected in 1628, was still in service when Lawne's Creek Parish was formed in 1640 and that it became the first church of that parish. Like other early churches, it appears to have been soon outgrown and replaced by a larger building on the same site. Since this replacement must have been caused by the rapid settlement of the surrounding region, it probably took place about 1650, when the increase of population became so marked as to demand the formation of the additional parish of Southwark and the new county of Surry.

In spite of the recorded references to "the Church at Hog Island", there is evidence that this early church actually was not built on the

¹⁸ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 175.

island itself, which is low and marshy, but on the adjacent mainland, where a high and well-drained site could readily be found. This evidence is afforded by foundation remains and broken colonial bricks, in the mainland woods back of Hog Island, which have long been accepted as relics of the first church built for Lawne's Creek Parish. Although these ancient foundations are now represented mainly by the trenches dug for their removal, to furnish material for a concrete sluice-gate at Hog Island, more than sixty years ago, their shape and size are still sharply defined. As thus revealed, these remains are clearly those of a large church overlapping the foundation of a smaller and presumably earlier building which had once occupied the same site. The overlapping of these foundations has been confirmed by the only survivor of the original excavators, Mr. H. F. Whitmer of Smithfield, who states that the work was done in the summer of 1883, for Mr. Barney, then owner of Hog Island. Both foundations have the long axis placed east and west, as in all colonial churches.

There can be little doubt that the earlier church was the first Lawne's Creek Church of 1628, and its dimensions, about forty by twenty feet inside, are appropriate for a chapel of that period. The narrow trench marking its outline suggests that it was a frame church, as indicated by the record, and stood on a slender brick foundation. An interesting variation from conventional rectangular form is found in a central offset eight feet wide extending three feet from its western end, perhaps the projection of a tower or porch.

The larger church can be identified as the second Lawne's Creek Church, which is assumed to have replaced the earlier building, about 1650, and if so, was the first church actually built by that parish. This larger church seems to have been about sixty by thirty feet, inside, with a more massive foundation, in keeping with its brick walls, which had crumbled down to the ground before the foundations were removed, according to Mr. Whitmer. These dimensions are the same as those of two other Surry churches, known to have been built in the last half of the seventeenth century, and are therefore consistent with a construction date at the beginning of this period, such as has been suggested for this church.

The site of these two early churches of Lawne's Creek Parish is on a high wooded point between two ravines leading down into James River, just west of the main road to Hog Island and a half mile south-east of the head of Hog Island Creek. As thus located, the original church was readily accessible, either by land or water, and Jamestown

Island was in plain sight on the opposite shore of the great river. An old road leads to the site from the colonial highway to the island, which formerly led down the hill only a quarter mile from the church. Brick remains indicating the presence of several graves may be seen in front of the church site, and there are two old wells, with traces of the footings of a churchyard wall. A lease made in 1769 refers to Hog Island Creek as "the Old Church Creek", from its association with the second of these ancient buildings.¹⁹

Perhaps the earliest recorded reference to the second church on this site is found in the will, dated 17th September, 1673, of George Watkin, who asked to be buried "in the Chancell of the Church of Lawne's Creek as my predecessors have beene in the parish Churches where they dwelt", and further gave for the use of Lawne's Creek Church one thousand pounds of tobacco, "to be laid out in Such a peece of Plate as the Church Wardens of the said Church shall appoint".²⁰ In November of the same year, payment was made by the Lawne's Creek vestry for repairs to their church, and this entry, although not conclusive as to the age of the church, shows that it was not new at that date.²¹

It was in this second Lawne's Creek Church that fourteen men of Surry met on the 12th December, 1673, to organize a popular movement against payment of the county levy or tax, which they claimed was unjust, oppressive and laid without their knowledge or consent. Because of unfavorable weather, which prevented a greater attendance, this protest came to nothing, but it foreshadowed the colonists' struggle for independence, a century later, on the same basis of "no taxation without representation", and had immediate significance as evidence of the popular unrest which resulted in Bacon's Rebellion of 1676.²²

As the tide of settlement swept inland from the James River and the size of the parish increased, the old church near Hog Island became inconvenient for most of its attendants and it was replaced by a third church on a new site adjoining the main road up the county. The exact date and type of construction of this new church are not known, but it appears to have been the building mentioned in a county record of 28th May, 1695, in which Captain Henry Tooker complained that "he had set panels at Phillip Shelley's request; he had sent for about

¹⁹ *Surry County Deeds*, 1769-78, X, 1.

²⁰ *Surry County Deeds, Wills*, 1671-84, II, 35.

²¹ *Surry County Orders*, 1671-90, 38.

²² *Surry County Orders*, 1671-90, 41.



PLATE 7 *Lower Southwark Church ruins, exterior.*



PLATE 8

Lower Southwark Church ruins, interior.

£2 worth of goods for him which he now refused to take & said goods being only proper for a Church s^d Shelly was building were not vendable & was to his damage 40£ sterling for which he prayed payment".²³ This church became Lower Southwark Church in 1739.

The date indicated for the construction of the third Lawne's Creek Church seems to be confirmed by a deed dated 24th August, 1695, from Thomas Drew to the church wardens of Lawne's Creek Parish for "about three quarters of an acre of Land for the building of a Church thereon for the convenience of a Church yard . . . scituate . . . near the Maine Roade . . . bounded . . . northeasterly on the land of Arthur Allen".²⁴ It appears from the date of this deed that, as in the case of several other colonial churches, the site was not deeded for this church until some time after it was under construction.

In a report made to the Bishop of London in 1724, the minister of Lawne's Creek stated that his parish was 10 miles broad on the river and 120 miles long. Further details illustrate the difficulties facing the minister of a parish of such huge extent, since he also reported that, weather permitting, services were held every Sunday at both the church and chapel, which were thirty miles apart. He preached at the church for two successive Sundays, and every third Sunday at the chapel, a lay reader taking his place during his absences from the church to go to the chapel and vice versa.²⁵

Since Southwark Parish was originally formed in 1647, it is reasonable to suppose that its first church must have been built about the year 1650. It therefore seems probable that this original Southwark Parish Church is the one mentioned in a deed dated 2nd April, 1655, from Thomas Woodhouse to Robert Hubbard for land known to have been located in the upper part of Southwark Parish and described as "one plantation devident of Land lying in Surrye Countie, & adjoyning to the Church, containing 400 acres granted unto mee by patent under the hand of Sir Will Berkley then Gover^r of Virginia".²⁶

The existence of this early Southwark Church does not appear to be commemorated by any tradition, but is nevertheless definitely established by the following court order, dated 23rd November, 1686: "It is the opinion of the Co^{rt} that the old Roade—that went from Southwarke pish Church by the old Church to the Stony Runn is

²³ *Surry County Orders, 1691-1713*, 131.

²⁴ *Surry County Deeds, 1694-1709*, V, 66.

²⁵ Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 289.

²⁶ *Surry County Deeds, 1652-1672*, I, 63.

the most Conv^t [convenient] & nearest way, and the Survey^r of the Highways therefore Ordered to remove the Roade & make it that way.²⁷

It is evident that the Southwark Parish Church mentioned in this order must have been the last church of that name, which once stood on the west side of the road from Old Court-house Corners to Four Mile Tree, about a half mile south of the river road and nearly $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Surry Court-house. The quoted reference to "the old Church" clearly indicates that this last Southwark Church replaced an earlier structure, presumably the first church in the parish, situated beside the road to Stony Run, a stream forming the headwaters of Sunken Marsh Creek.

Through the research of Mr. A. W. Bohannon, the county's treasurer and principal historian, the probable site of this first church has been discovered. It is located about three miles west of the site of the last church, and lies in the fork between the old river road and a lane leading to the ancient glebe of the parish. The spot was marked, until recently, by a large pile of colonial brick, but the ground has now been completely dug out, to a level below the foundation, and the bricks hauled away. Since the northern branch of Gray's Creek rises less than a quarter mile below the site, it is probably the "Church House Run" or "Church Run" often mentioned in court orders relating to the highway past this old church.²⁸

The site of the second Southwark Church has also been located, as a result of investigation by Mr. Bohannon, and a release deed to the churchyard has been secured from the owners of the surrounding property by the trustees of the parish. An appropriate marker, built of bricks from the old church, was erected at the site in 1929. A white marble flagstone, a foot square, from the aisle of the church, is inset in the back of the monument and a small cross of red brick in its front. The corners of the marker are formed of curious square and triangular bricks, thought to have come from the colonial brick wall which enclosed the churchyard.

The second Southwark Church stood in the fork of the present highway and the old road to Stony Run, which was in use until a few years ago, but is now overgrown with small trees. All the ruins have been hauled away for building material, but the outlines of the church and of the churchyard wall are sharply defined by the trenches dug

²⁷ *Surry County Orders, 1671-90*, 546.

²⁸ *Surry County Orders, 1691-1713*, 193.

to get out their foundations. These outlines reveal that the church was sixty by thirty feet, in the clear, and stood about a dozen feet inside the middle of the north end of a churchyard 108 feet wide by 135 feet long.

While it is not definitely known when this second Southwark Church replaced the earlier church of the parish, a number of references in the county records, all identified with the later building by their locality and dated during the decade beginning in 1673, offer strong evidence that it was built prior to that date. The first of these is a deed dated 1st August, 1673, from William Thomson to John Salway for property described as being near "the church at the head of Gray's Creek".²⁹ Since Brown's Mill, which once stood just south of the last Southwark Church, is also described in the county records as at the head of Gray's Creek, and old deeds refer to lands on the upper branches of this creek as above its head, it seems clear that this later church of the parish must have been the one mentioned in this deed. There is also the will, dated a month later in the same year, of Christopher Lewis, who left a silver flagon for the communion service of Southwark Church and asked to be buried in its chancel, as he would hardly have done in the case of an old church almost ready for replacement.³⁰

Even more conclusive proof of the existence of a church on the site last described is given in a deed of 25th January, 1675/6, from William Hux to Edward Howell for "fivety acres or thereabouts Scituate . . . in Southwarke pish in Surry county, neare unto the Ware Neck . . . beginning at a marked poplar on the Church Side of the Negroes Feild; standing at the head of a Valley & soe down the sd Valley to the Crosse Creek".³¹ In connection with this record, it should be noted that the head of Cross Creek is only a quarter mile east of the last church's site, while Ware Neck was on the opposite side of Gray's Creek from it and just below Brown's Mill, being the neck between Gray's Creek and Dark Swamp.

Further confirmation of the period of the second Southwark Church is supplied by a deposition of 1677 by John Fenlay that, during Bacon's Rebellion, having been sent by his master, Mr. Arthur Allen, from James City to Swann's Point and back home to Bacon's Castle, he "was by Robert Burgess on the road neare Southwark Church com-

²⁹ *Surry County Deeds, Wills, 1671-84*, II, 29.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, II, 35.

³¹ *Ibid.*, II, 101.

manded to stand".³² Since the last church's site is on the shortest road between the last two points mentioned, this record proves that a church was certainly in existence at this place by 1676, the year of Bacon's Rebellion.

The last of this series of references to a church in the above locality apparently show that the second Southwark Parish Church was completely re-roofed in 1682-3, since they deal with litigation between the vestry and a contractor about material obviously intended for that use. One entry, dated 4th July, 1682, records that "Judgmt is granted the Church wardens of Southwark Pish against John Smith for 679 ft. of inch pine plank & 8 pine plank 8 in. broad & 1½ in. thick which are to be of sufficient length for verge boards for the Church of sd. Pish, all of which plank are to be delivered at the said Church".³³ The plank involved is of thickness often specified for sheathing the roof of a colonial church, and since verge-boards are the exposed boards running down the sloping ends of a gable roof, the only item lacking for the covering of the building is that of shingles.

This deficiency is supplied by a record of further litigation, dated exactly a year later, which reads: "In the difference between Barth^o Higin's pl^t & Jn^o Smith defendt, it is ordered that [they and] Mr. Sam^l Thompson examine the Shingles at the Horse Bridge wheather they were Splitt and therefore not fitt for use . . . as also that they Informe themselves what Charge the said Higgins hath been at in getting the Shingles (hew'd by Jn^o Smith) used about the Church new hewed and all other damadges the said Higgins hath sustained by the said Smith's neglect".³⁴ This last record is definitely associated with the later Southwark Church by mention of the Horse Bridge, on which the road to this church crossed Gray's Creek, only a mile from its site and hence the nearest point to which building materials could be shipped by water.

The last Southwark Church appears to have fallen into disuse following the Revolutionary War and to have been finally abandoned during the general decline of religion in Virginia at the beginning of the last century. Its ruined walls were still standing as late as the War between the States, but have since disappeared. Evidence tending to show that the bricks for its construction were burned on the spot is

³² *Virginia Historical Magazine*, V, 372.

³³ *Surry County Orders, 1671-90*, 378.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 411.

found in a distinct stratum of charcoal and broken brick extending along the roadside at the site.

Shortly before Southwark Parish became coterminous with Surry County, through the cutting off of Sussex County in 1754, two brick churches were built by the parish vestry. The first of these, named Cypress Church from nearby Cypress Swamp, was ordered on the 5th April, 1743, at a price of £430 in Virginia currency, for the brickwork alone. It was apparently completed by the 17th February, 1745, when John Ravenscroft, the mason contractor, in consideration of the payment of all money still due him, agreed to repair extensive cracks in the south wall, which had caused the vestry to question "the ability and goodness of the Brick work".³⁵ The land upon which it was built was not deeded to the parish until the 19th June, 1753, when John Lane sold to the Southwark vestry 2¼ acres, "whereon now stands a Brick Church, lately built by Capt. Edmund Ruffin", apparently the general contractor for the building.³⁶

Cypress Church was located about 1¼ miles northeast of Dendron, on the north side of the old road to the present Surry Court-house. The last service in it, as an Episcopal church, was held in 1837 by Bishop Meade, who found it abandoned and out of repair, and preached to a congregation of one white woman and the former negro sexton.³⁷ It is reported that the roof fell in, one stormy night in August, 1919, and that one ruined wall stood until 1927.³⁸ The old church had, nevertheless, vindicated its builder's integrity by nearly 1¾ centuries of service after the vestry had doubted his handiwork. The foundation is still visible, although fast disappearing as its bricks are dug up and carted away, and reveals the dimensions of the church as about sixty by twenty-seven feet, inside, with foundation walls twenty-seven inches thick.

A photograph of Cypress Church, made in 1919 by Major W. E. MacClenny of Suffolk and reproduced as an illustration in his book "The Life of James O'Kelly", shows that the old building was of conventional design. Like other rectangular colonial churches, it had its main entrance in the west end and a secondary entrance in the south side, near the chancel. Both doorways and all windows were trimmed with circular arches, as in the second Lower Southwark

³⁵ *Surry County Deeds, 1741-45, IV, 452.*

³⁶ *Surry County Deeds, 1753-62, VII, 8.*

³⁷ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia, I, 310.*

³⁸ Bohannon, *Old Surry, 46.*

Church near Bacon's Castle, and there were three windows in the south wall, all west of the chancel doorway. The church had a high-pitched gable roof and the customary Flemish-bond brickwork, but without glazed headers.

The second of the brick churches mentioned was the last church built for colonial Southwark Parish and the only one of the Surry colonial churches which has survived, although it exists only as a ruin. An advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* for 18th April, 1751, gives the date of its construction and its location: "The Vestry of Southwark Parish in the county of Surry having come to a resolution to build a large Brick Church in the lower part of the said Parish, where the old Church now stands, Notice is hereby given to all Undertakers that it will be let on the 28th Day of May next, if fair, if not the next fair Day at the said Place. The plans of the said building may be seen by applying to William Salter, Clerk of the said Vestry, living near the said Church. Benjamin Cocke, William Short, Churchwardens."³⁹ According to Bishop Meade, this church was built in 1754, which represents a date of completion entirely consistent with this advertisement.⁴⁰

The advertisement quoted above shows that the new brick church ordered in 1751 occupied the same site as the first Lower Church of Southwark Parish, which had been the Mother Church of Lawne's Creek Parish prior to the latter's dissolution in 1739. The location of the churchyard, in which this last brick church's ruins still stand, agrees with the original deed of 1695 for the earlier church's site, since the present churchyard adjoins the state highway which replaced the old county road, while Arthur Allen's ancient mansion, "Bacon's Castle", is in full view across the fields to the northeast. In the woods west of the church there are traces of an abandoned road, which may have been the ancient "Maine Roade" of the deed or an entrance lane to the churchyard.

A bequest for the beautification of this church was made in 1764 by Mrs. Stith (born Elizabeth Bray and married, first, to Arthur Allen, second, to Arthur Smith, and last, to Mr. Stith). Her will gives "unto the Parish of Southwark Fifty pounds Current Money to purchase an Alter piece for the lower Church in the said County . . . I would have Moses and Aaron drawn at full length holding up

³⁹ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), XII, 79.

⁴⁰ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 310.

between them the Ten commandments and if money enough I would have the Lord's prayer in a small Fraim to hang on the right hand over the great Pew and the creed in another small Fraim to Hang on the Left Hand over the other great Pew."⁴¹

A memorial tablet of white marble, set in the ruined church's south wall, is inscribed: "LOWER SURRY CHURCH—LAWN'S CREEK PARISH—1639—BURNED 1868". This inscription, unfortunately, is inaccurate and misleading, since the ruined building was the Lower Church of Southwark Parish, not of Lawne's Creek Parish, which no longer existed when this church was built. Furthermore, the date 1639 is merely that of the earlier parish's establishment and has no connection with the present structure.

The ruined church is seventy-four by thirty-four feet, outside, with walls twenty-one inches, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ brick lengths, thick. In accordance with custom, there is a main doorway in the west end and a secondary entrance in the south side near the chancel. There are two windows in the east end, four in the south wall and five in the north one, the extra window being opposite the south door. The doors and windows have circular heads with plain arches of rubbed brick, without special trim.

The exterior brickwork is laid up in Flemish bond, and, as in several other colonial buildings on the south side of the James, where the local brick is soft and does not glaze well, no glazed headers are used. Due to the ruinous state of the building, it can be observed that its walls are practically double, consisting of an outer wall a brick length thick, laid in Flemish bond for appearance, and an inner wall $1\frac{1}{2}$ bricks thick, laid in English bond for strength, the two being keyed together at frequent intervals by bonding headers.

Although the aisle pavement has been removed during the seventy years since the church was burned, the brick retaining walls, filled in with earth on which the flagstones were laid, still remain to show that the aisle extended down the middle of the church to the chancel and then across to the south door. Joist holes in the west wall, with burned timber ends still in place, prove the existence of the usual west gallery at the time of the fire. Similar holes for the supports of the pulpit and of its sounding board, in connection with nailing grounds for the paneling behind the pulpit, clearly reveal its location in the middle of the north side of the church. The walls also furnish evidence that a winding stair to the gallery led up in the southwest corner of the building.

⁴¹ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), V, 115.

Further details of the interior arrangement may be deduced from Mrs. Stith's bequest, which mentions two great pews, above which the framed Lord's prayer and creed were to be hung. Since such tablets were customarily placed in the chancel, it seems certain that the great pews in question were located one on each side of the communion rail, at the east end of the building. This does not preclude the existence of other great pews in the body of the church and it seems likely that there were several. It does prove that most of the pews were of common or bench type, for none of the pews could have been distinguished as great pews, otherwise. These features have been incorporated in Plate 9, showing the probable original arrangement of the building.

Following the Revolutionary War, the old Lower Church suffered a period of abandonment, during which its few remaining members were not permitted to use it, due to the intense popular feeling against England and the English Church. After occasional use of the church by other denominations, Episcopal services were resumed in it, about 1847, on a mission basis, and in 1850 a resident minister, the Rev. John C. McCabe, was secured by the new congregation. Their occupancy of the old church having been disputed by these other denominations, the Episcopalians withdrew in 1854 and erected a modern frame building for their own use, on a neighboring site. It was consecrated by Bishop John Johns on the 29th April, 1857, as St. Andrew's Church.

This new church, often called "the silk-stocking church" from the wealth of its congregation, stood in the fork of the roads leading to High Gate and Surry Court-house, about three eighths of a mile west of the old church. It was burned in 1870, and was later replaced by a frame church, also called St. Andrew's, built across the High Gate road from the first church of that name.⁴² This last church, which stood in a grove on the north side of the highway, was recently demolished, after several years of disuse, and the present church of Southwark Parish is at Surry Court-house.

The burning of the colonial Lower Southwark Church took place soon after the Civil War, in 1868, and is said to have been done by negroes who had been using the churchyard as a burying ground, and set fire to the old church in a vain attempt to discourage the white people from taking back their ancient cemetery.⁴³ While the restora-

⁴² Bohannon, *Old Surry*, 47.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 47.

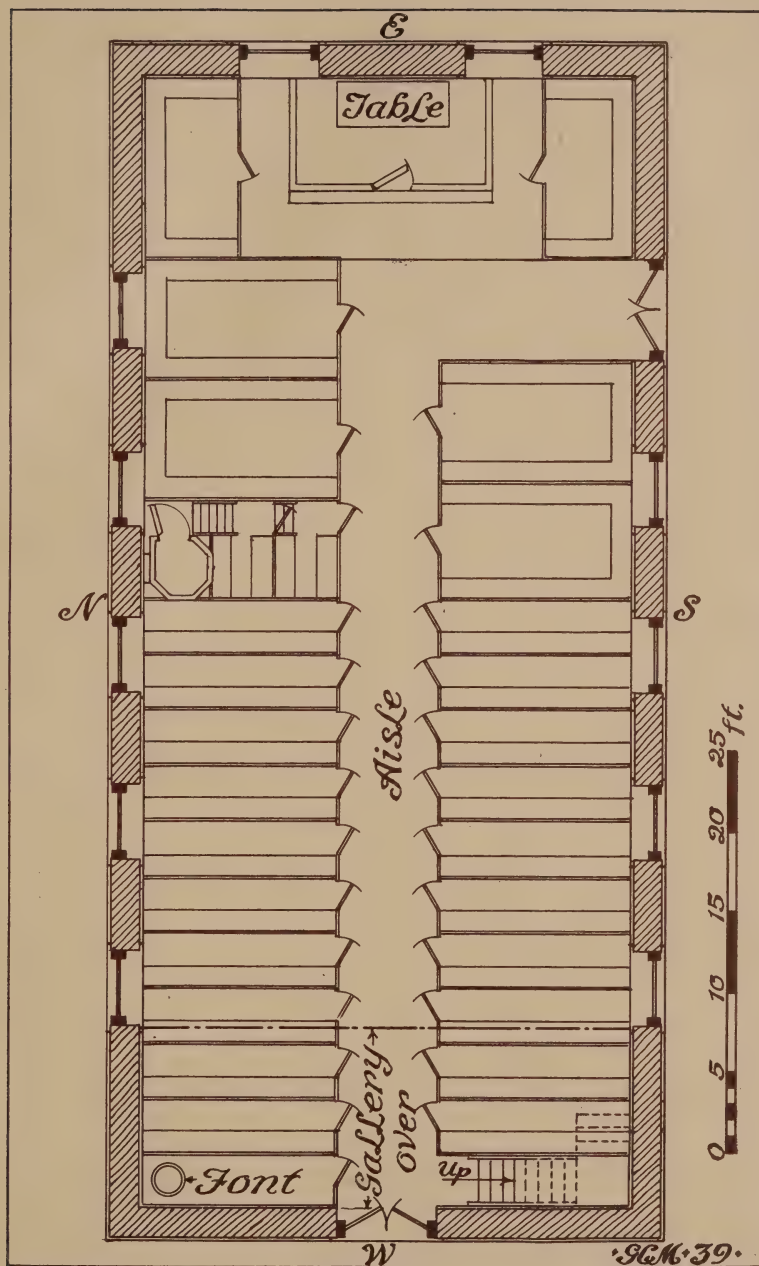


PLATE 9 Lower Southwark Church, interior arrangement.

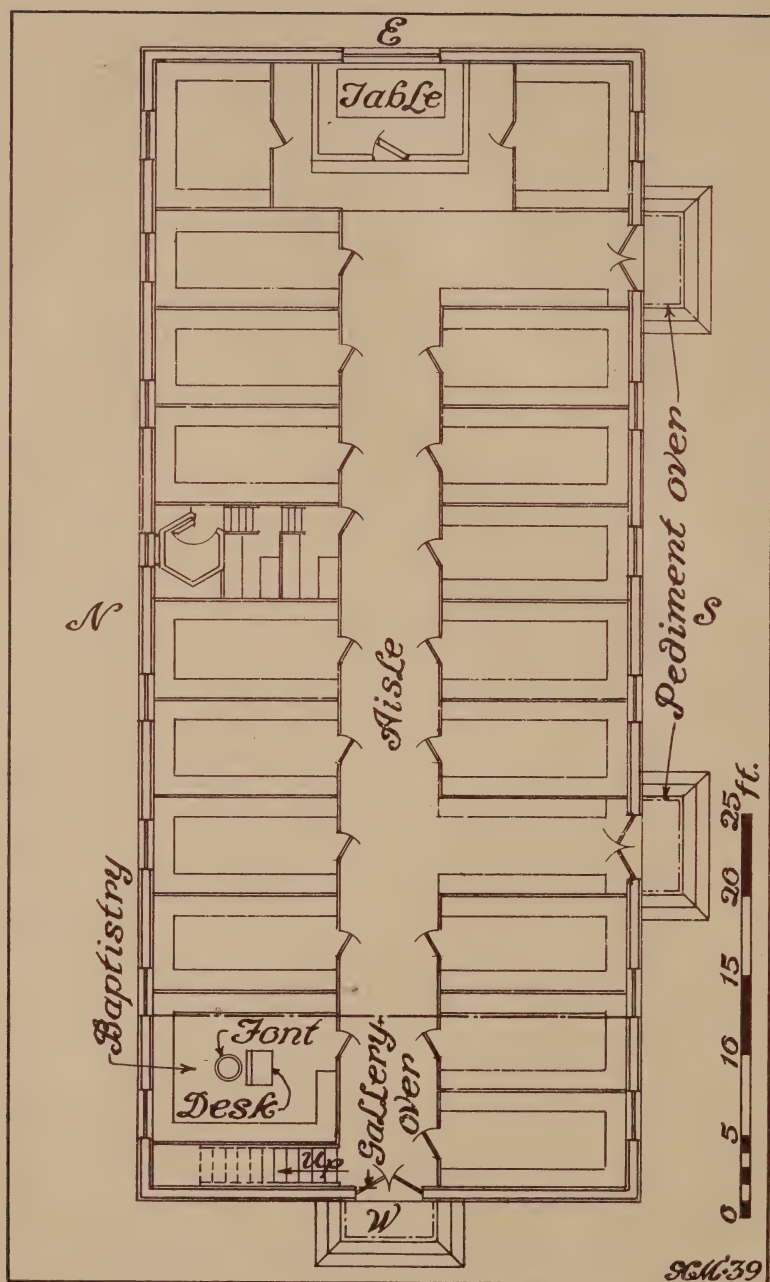


PLATE 10 St. Andrew's Church, Albemarle Parish,
interior arrangement.

tion of our colonial churches is generally to be desired, it is almost to be hoped that this one will be left undisturbed, for it makes a beautiful ruin. Roofless, except for the evergreen crowns of two full-grown cedar trees which stand like columns in the center aisle, it has its walls draped, inside and out, with shining English ivy and its floor carpeted with ivy and white-flowering periwinkle (*Vinca minor*). Red-bud saplings have sprung up in the corners of its nave, and young cedar trees have taken root in the top of its crumbling walls.

The old church is fittingly framed in a churchyard adorned with box bushes and flowering shrubs and filled with fine trees, at least one of which, an immense red oak, may well have been standing when the lot was deeded nearly two and a half centuries ago. The care given to this only remaining Surry colonial church and its surroundings, by an association of those maintaining family burial plots in the churchyard, is in happy contrast to the current neglect of the abandoned sites of others. It is hoped that Lower Southwark Church will long survive in undiminished beauty and security.

A report made by the minister of Southwark Parish in 1724 to the Bishop of London, has been preserved, as in the case of Lawne's Creek, and shows that Southwark was then 20 miles broad and inhabited for 100 miles in length. There were a mother church and two chapels of ease, at the nearer of which services were held every third Sunday, the minister preaching at the church on two Sundays out of three. At the other chapel, which was very remote, services were held once a month, on a week day. Congregations of about three hundred were usual at both chapels.⁴⁴

The mother church mentioned in this report must have been the second Southwark Church, and the nearer of the two chapels was located about ten miles due west of the mother church and not far from the village of Cabin Point. It seems probable that this Cabin Point Chapel was the second building of that name, since a preceding chapel on the same site is mentioned in the will of the second Benjamin Harrison of Wakefield, Surry County, dated 16th April, 1711, and proved nearly two years later. The fourth item of this will reads: "I give 20 lbs sterling to buy ornaments for the Chapel and that my executor take care to provide them so soon as may be after the new Chapell is built and my will is that five acres of my land be laid out

⁴⁴ Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 306.

where the old Chapel now stands and that it be held for that use forever.⁴⁵

The site of the first and second Cabin Point Chapels of Southwark Parish is located about a mile east of Cabin Point village, just south of U. S. Route 10, on the road leading to Benjamin Harrison's former plantation of "Montpelier", whose colonial dwelling house still stands. The ancient five-acre graveyard is now covered with a fine growth of woods and, although well filled with graves, is still used for burials.

It is said that the last Cabin Point Chapel had massive brick walls and granite steps, and its aisles were laid in alternate eighteen-inch squares of brown sandstone and white marble, set diagonally. It was burned in 1854 and was succeeded by a new brick church, which was built in Cabin Point village and is yet standing, although not in use.⁴⁶ The remains of the old chapel were hauled away for building purposes, but its site can be distinguished by the trenches dug to get at its foundation. It appears to have been about the same size as the last Southwark Church, or sixty by thirty feet, inside the walls. All the white marble flagstones of its aisles seem to have been removed but many of the brown sandstone squares, being soft and easily broken, were left and may still be found near the site. The second Benjamin Harrison and his wife were both buried in this ancient graveyard, but their tombs were removed to Brandon, about 1900, for safe-keeping.⁴⁷

The remote chapel of Southwark Parish, mentioned in the report of 1724, already quoted, seems to have been called the Nottoway River Chapel. Upon the formation of Albemarle Parish in 1739, this chapel became the first church of the new parish, under the name of Nottoway Church. It appears from the vestry record that Nottoway Church remained the parish church of Albemarle throughout the entire active existence of the parish, which extended over less than half a century, from 1739 to 1787. That this church was built by 1710 or earlier is evident from an entry in the Albemarle Parish register, recording the death in 1750 of Christopher Tatum, "who had been 40 years clerk at Nottoway Church".⁴⁸ This vestry book and register are both complete.

By the time that Sussex County was formed from Albemarle Parish in 1754, the old parish church, originally built as a chapel of ease, had

⁴⁵ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XXX, 409.

⁴⁶ Bohannon, *Old Surry*, 44.

⁴⁷ Bohannon, *Old Surry*, 44.

⁴⁸ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), XIV, 3.

become completely outgrown. This is apparent from a vestry book entry, dated 24th April, 1753, to the effect that "The vestry takeing under Consideration the Smallness of Nottoway Church and the large congregation frequenting the same are of Opinion that its necessary some alteration be made either by building a new Church or Adding to the Present & therefore do resolve to take the Same under their further Consideration". Despite the vestry's resolution, it was more than fifteen years before they took action to enlarge the old church. This enlargement, ordered 19th October, 1768, consisted of the addition of a wing, the same width as the church and thirty feet long. Four years later, the older portion was condemned as too rotten to be worth repairing and was replaced by a new building of the same dimensions, using the old pews, the entire structure being raised fifteen inches higher off the ground.

Except for repeated references to the original building as "the Church on the north side of Nottoway River", the vestry book gives little hint of the exact location of Nottoway Church, but two court orders of 1715 throw light upon the subject. The first, dated 16th March, states that "Upon the petition of John Hawthorn liberty is granted him to turn the main Road that goes from the Nottoway River Chappell into Prince George County".⁴⁹ It is reversed by the second, dated 10th April in the same year, which provides that "the Antient Main Road that Used to go from the Nottoway River Chappell into Jordans be still Continued and Cleared according to Law".⁵⁰

The ancient main road mentioned seems to have been the thoroughfare later known as the Jerusalem Plank Road, still in service as State Highway 35, which traverses the entire county of Sussex, along the north side of Nottoway River, and leads to Prince George county and Petersburg. Nottoway Church appears to have been located on the south side of this road, about three miles east of the Prince George-Sussex county line, and a half mile below Belsches' Millpond. It is once described in the vestry book as "Nottoway Church on Barlthorp's Creek", which may have been an ancient name for Moore's Swamp, the stream that flows out of the millpond.

The old church must have been abandoned not long after the close of the vestry record in 1787, as a result of the disestablishment of the

⁴⁹ *Surry County Orders, 1713-18*, 53.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 55.

English Church, and it stood empty and neglected for a number of years. Early in the past century, Mr. Hugh Clark Belsches of Greenyard plantation, a Scotch Presbyterian upon whose land the old building was situated, had it rebuilt as a place of worship for members of his own denomination, under the name of Ebeneza Church. This new period of service was ended by the Civil War and following it, the church having again been abandoned, its remains were sold to Mr. Rufus Harrison, and used to build a dwelling, which burned a year or two later.

Only a few fragments of colonial brick now remain to mark the site of the old church and its surrounding graveyard, although it is said that the last two gravestones were placed eighteen inches under ground for preservation, in their original location, at the orders of Major Benjamin Belsches' widow, when the land was put under cultivation. The site was once covered with large trees, but now lies in a plowed field on Greenyard plantation, directly opposite the entrance lane to the first Hugh Belsches' colonial mansion house, which is still standing.

The chapel of Lawne's Creek Parish mentioned in the report of 1724 is thought to have been Sacaree or Seacorrie Chapel, situated near the swamp of that name, which flows into Assamoosick Swamp about four miles west of the Southampton-Sussex County line. This chapel must have been about thirty miles from the mother church of the parish, as stated in the report, and probably stood on or near Sacaree Farm, long the center of one of the earliest settlements in this part of the county.

The chapel's site is believed to lie in an ancient cemetery recently discovered through the unearthing of several bodies by workmen digging a sandpit on this farm. This old cemetery is in old-field pine woods just west of the Chinkapin Wagon Road and about midway between its intersections with Seacorrie Swamp and the side road from Wakefield. One of the older residents of the county remembers having been told, as a child in the 1870's, that an old churchyard lay in these woods, which tends to confirm this as the chapel's site.

It seems likely that this pioneer chapel was either a log building or a rough frame structure set on wooden blocks, since no trace of a brick foundation is evident at its probable site. It is noteworthy that, according to the report of 1724, this chapel had a larger congregation than the mother church, being credited with 300 attendants, as against only 120 for the parish church.

Sacauree Chapel came into the possession of the new parish of Albemarle, upon the latter's formation, but soon passed out of service, since it is no longer mentioned in the vestry record after 1745.

Construction of a new church for Albemarle, in addition to those inherited from the parent parishes, seems to have been undertaken soon after the new parish's creation. This is seen from an order of council dated 15th December, 1742, referring to "the Petition of Several of the Inhabitants of the Parish of Albemarle, in the County of Surry in relation to appointing a convenient Place for building a new Church in the said parish."⁵¹ Although it is recorded in the vestry book that the building of this church had been ordered on the 20th July, 1741, disagreement as to its location, leading to the above order of council, evidently held up its construction for nearly two years. Purchase of a site was accordingly not authorized until June, 1743, and the churchwardens having then failed to act, the deal was not closed until 25th July, 1744, three years after the original order.

In spite of this delay, the site finally adopted was the one originally selected by the Reverend William Willie, rector of Albemarle Parish throughout its entire existence. This site was described as being "on the North side of Coppahanock or Beaver dams on the public road leading from the court-house to Peter's Bridge on the land of Wm Rose", and a later entry refers to the new building as being at Beaverdam Bridge. The vestry book records the name of this edifice as St. Paul's Church, although it is occasionally termed a chapel. There is no indication that it was built of brick and it may be assumed that it was a frame building, like all other known churches of Albemarle Parish.

Since Surry Court-house was then situated near the head of Gray's Creek, at the crossroads known today as "Old Court-house Corners", while Peter's Bridge over Nottoway River and Beaverdam Bridge over Coppahaunk Swamp still bear the same names, after the lapse of two centuries, the general location of St. Paul's Church can be identified. According to the late Mr. Robert D. West of Waverly, it is known that Beaverdam Bridge was the one on which the Beaverdam Road crosses Coppahaunk about two miles south of Waverly and a half mile east of it, this road being also known in colonial times as Allen's Road, after one of the wealthy Allens of Surry, who built it to reach his lands in the south end of the county.

⁵¹ *Calendar of State Papers*, I, 237.

Since the land near the stream is low and swampy, it seems probable that the actual site of St. Paul's Church was on higher ground, a quarter mile north of the swamp, at the existing crossroads. Support for this assumption is found in a court order of 1754, fining John Bane "for not clearing his Road leading from the Governor's Road to Saint Paul's Chappell", ⁵² indicating that the church stood near the junction of two roads. The same John Bane was paid by the vestry, a year later, for setting up a well sweep and finding buckets for a well dug by William Carlisle in 1747 "at St. Paul's Chapel." It is apparent that St. Paul's Church was built to replace the ancient Sacauree Chapel, located only five miles further south on the same road, since the older building seems to have gone out of use at about the same time that the new building was completed.

Among the first orders in the Albemarle vestry book is one dated 16th November, 1742, for the construction of a new chapel "in the upper end of this Parish, above the mouth of Stony Creek, on the land of Peter Green on the north side of Nottoway River, convenient to the best Water, 48 by 24 ft. in the clear, 11 ft. pitch to the spring of the Arch." This chapel was to be a frame building with brick underpinning, and a notable feature of its interior was a three-decker pulpit, with "a platform & steps for ascending to the Reading Pugh," just below the pulpit. Durability was given precedence over beauty in its exterior finish, for it was ordered "to be well tarr'd outside (Walls, Roof, Doors and Window Shutters)." It seems probable that in this case pine tar, thinned with turpentine, was applied with a brush, so as to produce a brown stain of preservative character. Following the precedent set in naming St. Paul's Church, this new building was called St. Mark's Chapel, and the date specified for its completion was the last day of June, 1744. In accordance with colonial custom, Peter Green was appointed sexton of the church built on his land.

After nearly twenty years of service, this chapel, then known as St. Mark's Church, was, on the 27th November, 1761, ordered to be enlarged by "an Addition of thirty foot long on the North side of the same Weadth—other Dementions and fashion of the present building." Barely a decade later, even this enlarged church was found too small and, on the 15th July, 1772, it was ordered to be replaced on the same site by a new frame structure, seventy feet by thirty feet

⁵² *Sussex County Orders*, 1754-66, 28.

in the clear, twenty-two feet pitch, with a gallery at the west end. This second St. Mark's Church, having been built later than most of the other Albemarle Parish churches, appears to have survived longer, and is known to have been in service, after the Civil War, as an "old-field school," which several of the oldest local residents attended, as boys. The exact date of its disappearance is unknown, but its foundation was still visible until the close of the last century.

The site of St. Mark's Church lies just west of the Atlantic Coast Line Railway tracks, an eighth of a mile south of Huske siding and store. The former existence of the old building is commemorated in name by the Church Woods, at the edge of which the site now lies, and by Green's Church Bridge over the Nottoway River, a mile and a quarter to the southeast. The road that crosses this bridge is still known as Green's Road, suggesting that the original road and bridge were built by Peter Green for access to the church which stood upon his land. The site is now marked only by the remains of an ancient well, which once served to supply drinking water to the attendants of both church and school.

The last of four churches mentioned in the vestry book of Albemarle Parish, while this parish was yet included in Surry County, is Spring Swamp Chapel. Since this building was already in existence at the opening of the vestry book in 1742, its origin is unknown. It was probably built either for Southwark Parish during the interval between the report of 1724 and the formation of Albemarle in 1739, or for the new parish after the latter date. It seems likely that it was a small wooden structure and soon outgrown, for a large new chapel was ordered to be erected on its site in 1747.

This last Spring Swamp Chapel was accepted by the vestry, late in 1750, under that title, but was soon renamed St. Andrew's Church. It was a frame building, sixty-nine by twenty-six feet in the clear, with a pitch (or height of wall) of sixteen feet, and was underpinned with brick for six inches below and eighteen inches above ground. The contract price for its construction was only £290 and the builder was James Anderson of Amelia County. This chapel's arrangement was specified in great detail and is shown in Plate 10. In addition to the usual west doorway, there were two entrances on the south side, as in a Quaker meeting-house. All doors were four feet wide by seven feet high, double, and hung with suitable H-L hinges. There were six windows in the south wall, one of extra width in the chancel, and

eight in the north wall, including a small high window back of the three-decker pulpit.

The pews were four feet high, with plank seats on three sides and hinged doors. All of them were double pews, six feet wide and ten feet long, except two in the chancel, which were seven by nine feet in size. Between these chancel pews was the communion table, raised two steps above the aisle, which was six feet wide. Plank seats were also fitted in the two side entries, to give additional seating capacity. Perhaps the most unusual feature of this chapel was the reservation of the space of two pews, in the northwest corner of the building, for a baptistry, with seats all around it, and a font and lectern in the center. In the west end was provided the usual gallery, equipped with a box pew on the north side and common pews on the south. The doorways were protected from the weather by "frontons" or pediments, shingled like the main roof, which had clipped gables, being hipped above the collar beams.

The original Spring Swamp Chapel and its successor on the same site, St. Andrew's Church, seem to have been located on what is now called Spring Creek, a swampy stream traversing the southern end of the present Sussex County and arising a short distance north by east of the town of Jarratt. A clue to St. Andrew's Church's situation is given by a court order of 1758, authorizing the clearing of a road "from the High Hill Road, neare to the foot of the said Hill, to Spring Swamp Church."⁵³ The elevation known as High Hill ends on the west side of Nottoway River, six miles north of Jarratt and only 3½ miles above Spring Creek. A less definite reference to this church's site is found in a payment made by the vestry to Charles Judkins, in 1772, "for a Causway over the branch to the Spring at St. Andrew's Church."

The communion silver service given to colonial St. Andrew's Church of Albemarle Parish by the will of John Allen of Surry, was used at the modern St. Andrew's Church, built about 1877 in a fork of the Jerusalem Plank Road, three quarters of a mile north of Littleton in Sussex County, until the latter building was abandoned early in the last century. This silver has since been lent to the Episcopal church at Courtland, in the adjoining county of Southampton, and is still in use there.

⁵³ *Sussex County Orders, 1757-61*, 40.

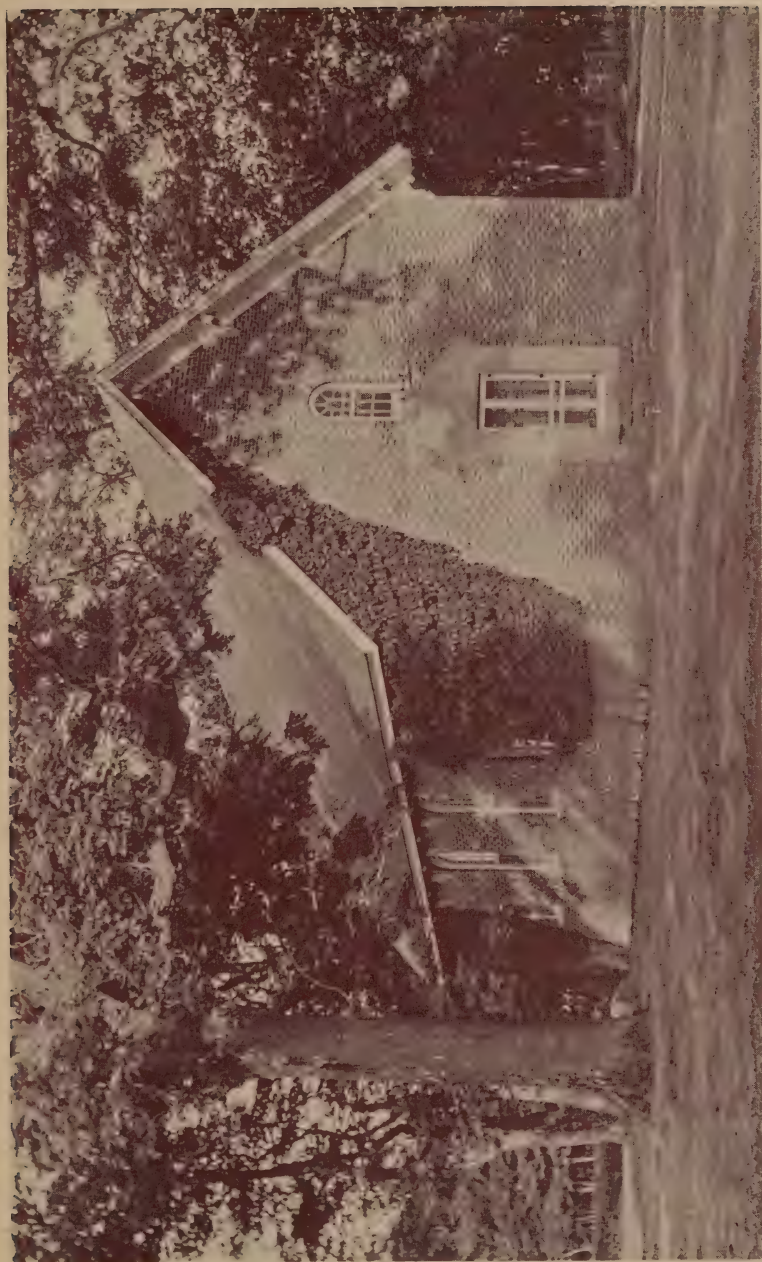


PLATE 11

Westover Church in 1924.

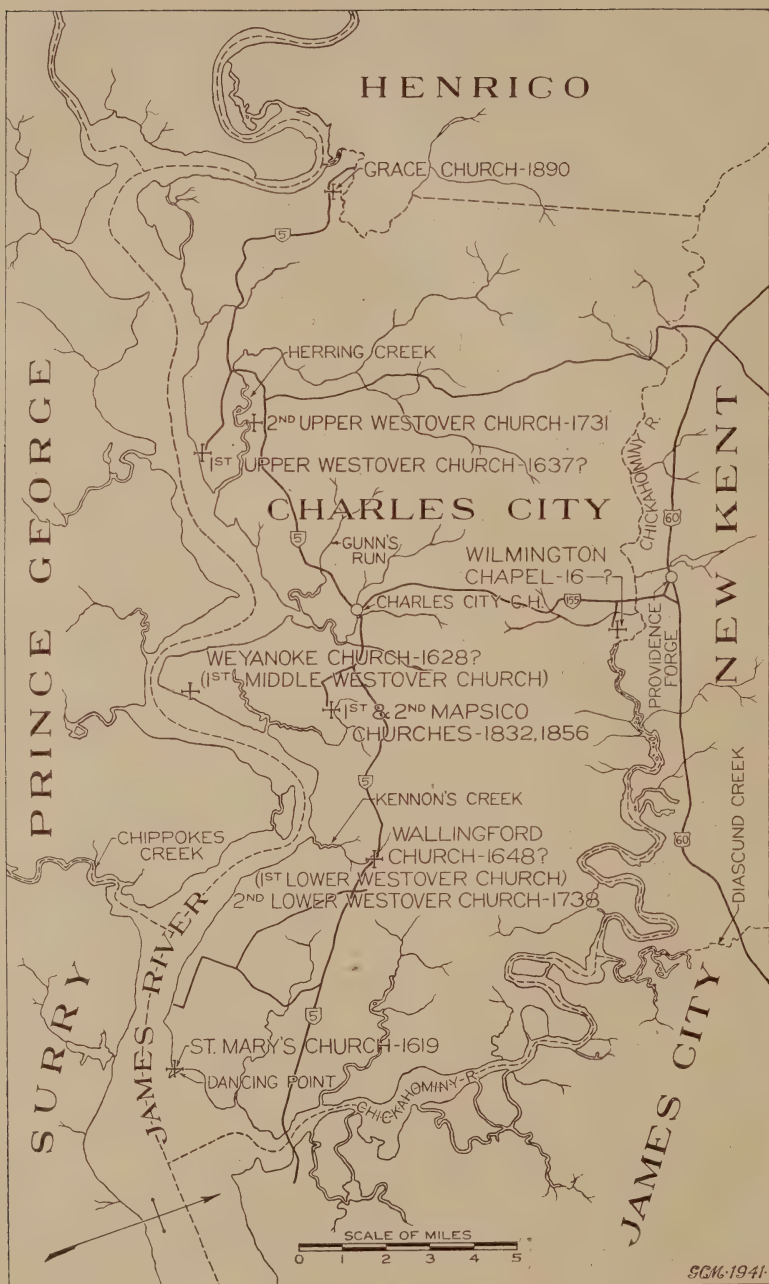


PLATE 12.

Map of Charles City County.

CHAPTER III.

Charles City County Churches

AS A RESULT of their close proximity to the original settlement at Jamestown, the colonial parishes of the present Charles City County derived their existence from some of the earliest plantations established by the Virginia colonists. Unfortunately, the destruction of most of the oldest county and parish records has made it difficult to determine exact dates of construction for the first churches in this region.

Charles City was one of the four great corporations set up by the Virginia Company of London in 1618,¹ and retained its original area when it became one of the eight counties or shires into which the Virginia colony was divided in 1634. Following the early practice of dividing counties at the ridges bounding the watershed of a river, rather than at the stream itself, Charles City County extended on both sides of the James River, from James City County on the east to Henrico County on the west. In accordance with the later tendency to subdivide the colony at the rivers, Charles City's territory south of the James was cut off in 1702 to form the new county of Prince George.² Charles City County's eastern boundary, set in 1634 at the Chickahominy River, was later shifted progressively westward to suit the development of a James City parish, but was returned to that stream in 1720, after the parish in question had been dissolved.³

The pioneer settlements in Charles City County constituted plantation parishes, some of which were among the earliest in Virginia history. The first of these, Charles City, was established about 1612/13, as a place of "retreat against any forraigne enemy", on the south bank of the Appomattox River, several miles above its mouth, and gave its name first to the corporation and then to the county.⁴

At about the same period, the early plantation of West and Shirley Hundred, on the north side of James River, about twenty-five miles above Jamestown, was founded by Governor Dale, as a part of his New Bermudas, centered about the parent settlement of Bermuda Hundred.⁵

¹ Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London*, III, 100.

² Hening, *Statutes at Large*, VIII, 223.

³ *William and Mary Quarterly*, (2), XVIII, 115.

⁴ Smith, *General History of Virginia*, II, 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 6.

The ancient plantation of Weyanoke was given by Opechan-canough to Sir George Yeardley in 1617 and the gift was confirmed by the Virginia Company of London in the following year, the grant including 2200 acres of land on the north bank of James River, between Mapsico and Queen's Creeks.⁶

Another pioneer settlement in the Corporation of Charles City was Smith's Hundred, established in 1618, as "the first of any moment" in the colony.⁷ Its importance was due to the large area granted, which included 100,000 acres between Weyanoke and the Chickahominy River, on the north side of the James. This settlement had its name changed to Southampton Hundred in 1619⁸ and suffered so severely in the great Indian massacre of 1622 that its surviving colonists were transferred to Hog Island. The project was later abandoned and the company lands regranted to individuals, a dozen years after the massacre.

On the south side of the James, within the original Charles City County, the most notable early plantation, after Charles City itself, was Martin's Brandon. Originally granted to Captain John Martin in 1618, it was repatented by John Sadler, Richard Quiney and associates in 1643.⁹ The ancient south side plantation of Merchants' Hope, several miles further up the James, was also first held by Captain Martin, before 1620, and later passed to Sadler and his friends.¹⁰

Westover plantation, comprising lands originally granted to Thomas West, Lord De la Warr, and his three brothers, Francis, John and Nathaniel, formed the nucleus of West and Shirley Hundred, whose name commemorates the union of the West and Sherley families through the marriage of Lord De la Warr to Cecily Sherley. West and Shirley Hundred developed into Westover Parish, which lay on both sides of the James River and extended from the Henrico County line to Old Man's Run (now Gunn's Run) on the north side of the river, and to Flowerdew Hundred on its south side. Weyanoke plantation became Weyanoke Parish, which also crossed James River and extended from Westover Parish east to David Jones' Creek (now Kennon's Creek) on the north river bank and to Upper Chippokes Creek on the south bank.¹¹

⁶ Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London*, III, 102.

⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 349.

⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 317.

⁹ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 55.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 35.

¹¹ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 251.

Wallingford Parish, originally Chickahominy Parish in James City County, lay on both sides of the Chickahominy and was gradually extended westward into the former territory of Southampton Hundred, until both county and parish acquired a western boundary at David Jones' Creek.¹² Wallingford parish was subdivided at an early date and its upper portion formed into the parish of Wilmington, on both sides of that stream, beginning at the upper border of Wallingford Parish.¹³ Wilmington Parish was originally known as the Upper Parish of the Chickahominy; it was nine miles wide and probably terminated at the lower limits of the present Henrico and Hanover Counties.

It appears that Martin's Brandon originally had the status of a plantation parish, since the patent of 1643 mentions a glebe there, but it was included in the adjoining parish of Weyanoke for a dozen years after that date. In 1655, the lower section of Weyanoke Parish, on the south side of the James was cut off to constitute the parish of Martin's Brandon,¹⁴ and the westerly portion of Westover Parish's territory south of the same river was erected into the parish of Jordan's.¹⁵ The independent existence of Jordan's Parish was very brief, since it was reunited to Westover, by consent of the parishioners, in the year 1688.¹⁶ The upper end of the original county of Charles City, south of the James, was included within the parish of Bristol at its formation in 1643, the rest of this parish lying on the opposite side of Appomattox River, in what was then Henrico and is now Chesterfield County.¹⁷

Charles City County lost all its territory south of the James in 1703, at the formation of Prince George County, and attained its present limits in 1720, through an act of assembly which again made the Chickahominy River its eastern boundary.¹⁸ The same act dissolved Wallingford Parish, uniting its territory west of the Chickahominy to Westover Parish and its remaining area to James City Parish. It also dissolved Weyanoke Parish, uniting its northern part to Westover, and enlarged Martin's Brandon Parish by adding to it all of Westover and Weyanoke Parishes south of the James River. In 1724, Wilming-

¹² Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 278.

¹³ Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 278.

¹⁴ *Charles City Records*, 1655-65, 3.

¹⁵ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, VIII, 389.

¹⁶ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council*, I, 512.

¹⁷ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 251.

¹⁸ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVIII, 106.

ton Parish was dissolved and its territory south of the Chickahominy River was merged with Westover Parish, which thus became coterminous with Charles City County and has remained so, down to the present day.¹⁹

The earliest recorded church within the present boundaries of Charles City County was St. Mary's Church in Smith's Hundred, which later became Southampton Hundred.²⁰ This pioneer church has already been mentioned in a previous chapter on the colonial churches of James City County,²¹ within whose territory west of the Chickahominy, St. Mary's Church is known to have stood.

This early church in Smith's Hundred was founded by Mrs. Mary (Ramsay) Robinson of London, whose will, dated 13th February, 1617/8, and proved 6th October, 1618, "gave and bequeathed toward the helpe of the poore people in Virginia, towards the building of a church and reduceinge them to the knowledge of God's word, the sum of two hundred pounds, to be bestowed . . . within two yeares next after my decease."²²

In the annals of the Virginia Company of London for 1619, it is recorded that "Two Persons unknowne have given faire Plate, and other rich Ornaments for two Communion Tables; whereof one for the Colledge and the other for the Church of Mistrisse Mary Robinsons founding: who in the former yeere [1618] by her Will, gave 200 pounds towards the founding of a Church in Virginia."²³

Identification of the church thus founded as that of the plantation parish of Southampton Hundred is established by a General Court record of 9th February, 1627/8, stating that "At this Court Temperance Lady Yeardley delivered up those guiftes . . . given to the use of the Colledge [and] More for the use of Southampton Hundred church given by M^{rs} Mary Robinson: One Communion silver guilt cup," etc.²⁴ Since this silver had previously been recorded as the gift of an unknown donor, the clause "given by M^{rs} Mary Robinson" undoubtedly qualifies "Southampton Hundred church," identifying it as the one founded by the will already quoted. Lady Yeardley was the widow of Sir George Yeardley, former governor of Virginia and captain of Southampton Hundred until his death in 1627.

¹⁹ Chamberlayne, *Vestry Book of Blisland Parish*, xxix.

²⁰ Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London*, III, 102.

²¹ See page 17.

²² Brown, *First Republic in America*, 275.

²³ Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London*, III, 117.

²⁴ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 167.

The name of this ancient church building is given as "S^{nt} Mary's Church in Smiths Hundred in Virginia" in the inscription on its historic communion cup, which bears the London date letter for 1618/19, and is still in service at old St. John's Church, Hampton, being the English church silver in longest use in America. The number of references to this church, in contemporary documents, leaves little room for doubt that it actually was constructed, and if so, it must have stood, like the earliest churches at Jamestown and Accomack, within the palisade that enclosed the settlement itself.

The records for 1619 of the Virginia Company of London are definite in regard to the location of this settlement, stating that the "Smythe's Hundred people are seated at Dauncing Point, as the most convenient point within their limit." Since the same record goes on to say that "There hath been much sickness among them, so that this year no matter of gain or of great industry can be expected of them", it seems equally definite that no change of location was then in prospect.²⁵ It may be safely concluded, therefore, that the settlement and church remained at Dancing Point until they met with final disaster in the great Indian massacre of 1622. So much of this historic point has been washed away in modern times that the site of the early settlement may have entirely disappeared, through the encroachments of the river current, for the first colonial establishments were usually close to the water's edge.

This pioneer church was probably a very crude and simple structure, and it is not at all likely that it had a foundation substantial enough to have survived. Among the few early colonial Virginia churches of whose type of construction we have any knowledge, the only one that was contemporary with St. Mary's was the fourth Jamestown Church, built by Governor Argall about 1617, which was of framed timber, not logs, with a brick and cobblestone foundation. This Argall church represented a more advanced stage of settlement than did the church at Southampton Hundred, however, and St. Mary's was probably more nearly comparable with the first church at Jamestown, and therefore possibly of "crotch" or "cruck" construction, with wattled walls and thatched roof.²⁶

The first church to succeed St. Mary's, in the region bordering the lower Chickahominy River, must have been the mother church of the ancient Chickahominy Parish. The earliest recorded mention of this

²⁵ Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London*, III, 246.

²⁶ See page 3.

parish is found in a list of burgesses for 1639, strongly suggesting its creation in that year.²⁷ Although the census of 1634 shows that James City County originally extended only to the Chickahominy River on the west,²⁸ it is apparent that Chickahominy Parish was created as a parish within James City County, but extending upward on both sides of this river. This means that, so far as can now be determined, the new parish's western boundary became that of the county also. Chickahominy Parish became known as Wallingford Parish in March, 1642/3, in conformity with an act of assembly of that date,²⁹ and further legislation enacted by the same assembly extended the parish's western boundary to David Jones' Creek, now Kennon's Creek, in the present Charles City County.³⁰

In spite of the fact that a large part of Wallingford Parish lay in the present James City County, on the eastern side of the Chickahominy, it appears that the first Wallingford Church was built on the extreme western frontier of the parish, fully five miles beyond the river which divided its territory. The site of this ancient building lies on the southwest side of the old road to Sandy Point, which now forms part of State Route 5, and is about $6\frac{3}{4}$ miles east of Charles City Court-house and a hundred yards east of the present Kennon's Creek. Since this stream, under the ancient name of David Jones' Creek, did not become the western boundary of Wallingford Parish until March, 1643, the church could not have been built here prior to that date, but it seems possible that it was completed by 1648.

The remains of this church have been generally overlooked, because of their proximity to the known ruins of a later building, the second Lower Church of Westover Parish. These earlier remains are of exceptional interest and indicate that Wallingford Church was a brick building, judging from the presence of water-table bricks and glazed headers among the ruins, since neither were commonly used in the underpinning of a wooden church. The foundation is only two brick lengths, or eighteen inches, in thickness, and measures about fifty-eight by twenty feet, outside. The building was originally only forty feet by twenty feet, outside. It was subsequently lengthened eighteen feet at the chancel end and was again enlarged by addition of a north wing about nineteen feet wide by twenty-four feet long, inside, placed near

²⁷ McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses, 1619-59/60*, xv.

²⁸ *Colonial Records of Virginia*, 91.

²⁹ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 249.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 278.

the east end of the church. The aisle is paved with brick, but the pavement bricks are worthless for modern use, since they have been buried so long that they crumble upon being exposed to the air. The north wall of the main foundation is seventy feet south of the later church and almost in line with it. The original small size and repeated enlargement of this old building tend to support the conclusion that it was the first church of the parish.

Wallingford Parish did not even have a chapel of ease on the east side of the Chickahominy River, and the hardship resulting from this arrangement gave rise to petitions by the parishioners of Wallingford on that side of this river,³¹ which finally led, in 1720, to the dissolution of this parish, along with several other parishes similarly divided.

When Wallingford Parish was dissolved in 1720 and its territory west of the Chickahominy was merged with Westover Parish, this old Wallingford Parish Church fell within the area thus added to Westover. This fact is clearly established by a report made only four years later to the Bishop of London by the rector of Westover, the Reverend Peter Fontaine.³² In this report, Mr. Fontaine states that, after he became rector of Westover Parish, as enlarged by the Act of 1720, "the churches of Westover, Weyanoke and Wallingford came under my care," and he later makes it apparent that Wallingford Church became the first Lower Church of Westover. After eighteen more years of service, this ancient Lower Westover Church was superseded by a new Lower Church on an adjoining site, and was then probably pulled down.

The geographical position of Wilmington Parish, as well as the lack of early records referring to it, points to its having been formed from the upper parts of Wallingford Parish, through the usual process of subdivision. A petition by Captain Bennett Freeman, asking, as a matter of convenience, that his house be included in Wallingford parish instead of in "the Upper Parish of the Chickahominy" (evidently the same ecclesiastical unit of area that was later known as Wilmington Parish), was granted by the House of Burgesses in 1658.³³ Since such boundary adjustments commonly followed the creation of a new parish, this suggests that the subdivision of Wallingford took place shortly before the date mentioned. It seems probable that it was accomplished by an order of James City County court, in accordance

³¹ McIlwaine, *Legislative Journals of Council*, I, 260.

³² Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 270.

³³ McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses*, 1619-59/60, 109.

with the Act of 1655/6, authorizing such courts to subdivide the counties into parishes.³⁴

Confirmation of this theory of the origin of Wilmington Parish is found in a deed of gift of 1640, from Robert Holt to Richard Bell, both of Chickahominy Parish, for land at the head of Checkeroes Creek, on the east side of Chickahominy River.³⁵ Since Captain Freeman's property, made the upper boundary of Wallingford Parish in 1658, is shown by several patents of 1635-1638 to have been located below Checkeroes Creek, it seems evident that Holt's land, patented by him in 1640, lay in what later became Wilmington Parish but was then still in Chickahominy Parish.³⁶ The name "Upper Parish of the Chickahominy", applied to Wilmington Parish in the Freeman petition of 1658, also points to this upper parish's having been cut off from Wallingford Parish. This follows from the fact that Wallingford, if it had been contemporary with Wilmington, instead of its parent parish, would originally have been called the "Lower Parish of the Chickahominy" rather than merely Chickahominy Parish, as in the records quoted.

The act dissolving Wallingford Parish in 1720 set Charles City's eastern and northern boundary again at the Chickahominy River and left Wilmington Parish's territory divided between James City and Charles City Counties. The inconvenience of this arrangement hastened the end of Wilmington Parish, and in 1724 it was dissolved by an act of assembly³⁷ whose operation was suspended until 1725, to allow its rector to obtain another living of equal or greater value.³⁸ This act divided Wilmington's area north and east of the Chickahominy between St. Peter's, Blisland and James City Parishes and merged its area south of that river with Westover Parish, which thus became coterminous with Charles City County and still remains so.

A report made by the rector of Wilmington to the Bishop of London in 1724 states that his parish then had three churches.³⁹ In a previous chapter on the James City colonial churches, it was demonstrated that only two of these three Wilmington churches, namely, the upper and lower ones, stood on the present James City side of the river, the upper church falling in Blisland and the lower one in James

³⁴ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 469.

³⁵ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 151.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 97, 98, 120.

³⁷ Chamberlayne, *Vestry Book of Blisland Parish*, xxiv.

³⁸ *Calendar of State Papers, America & W. Indies, 1724-5*, 141.

³⁹ Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 278.



PLATE 13.

Second Mapsico Church.

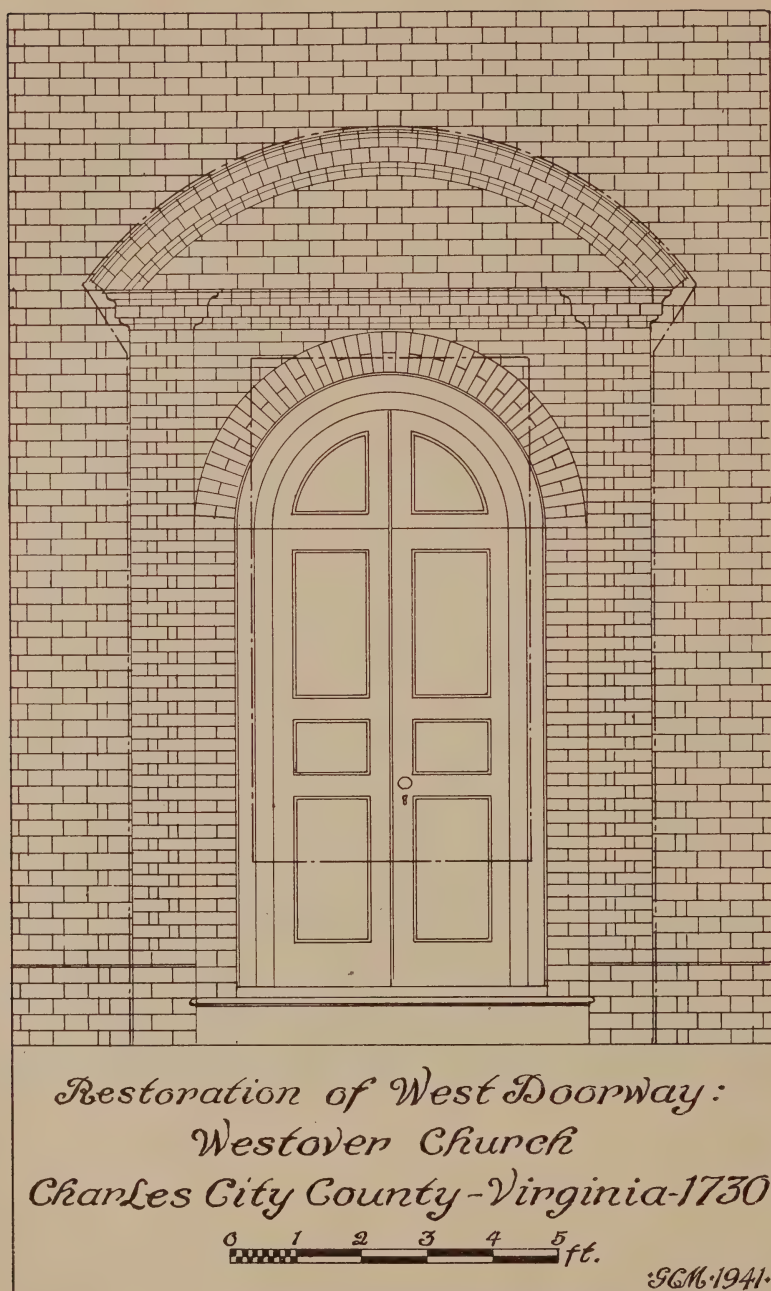


PLATE 14. Restoration of west doorway, Westover Church.
(Note: Dot-and-dash lines show existing cement doorway.)

City Parish.⁴⁰ It is evident, therefore, that the third church of Wilmington was a chapel of ease built for the accommodation of its parishioners west of the Chickahominy River.

After passage of the Act of 1720, this chapel stood in Charles City County, and in 1725 it became a chapel of Westover Parish, although no evidence has been found that it continued in service after that date. It seems probable that it was the church which traditionally stood on the south bank of the Chickahominy, three quarters of a mile east by south of the existing Mount Sterling plantation house, in a wooded churchyard still marked by numerous gravestones. At least one of these stones is colonial, being that of Mrs. Elizabeth Soan Mossom, who was born and brought up at Mount Sterling and died in 1759. She was the second wife of the Reverend David Mossom, rector of old St. Peter's Church, in New Kent County. No trace of the chapel's foundation has been found, but the site has always been marked by quantities of colonial brick, perhaps from the underpinning of a frame building.

Another chapel of Westover Parish that had been a church of an earlier parish was Merchant's Hope Church, on the south side of the James River and almost due south of Westover plantation. This fine old brick church is believed to have been built in 1657 as the mother church of Jordan's Parish, cut off from Westover Parish in 1655. It became a chapel of ease of Westover, when Jordan's was reunited with that parish in 1688, and was the Upper Chapel of Martin's Brandon Parish after 1720, when the latter parish was extended to include most of the original Charles City County's territory south of James River. Because old Merchant's Hope Church has stood, during most of its existence, in Prince George County, a more complete description of it will be left to a later chapter on the colonial churches of Prince George and Dinwiddie Counties.

It is traditional that there was a church with a minister and congregation at Weyanoke in 1628, and that the general assembly of the colony met in this church at a very early date, although documentary confirmation of both statements appears to be lacking. The site of this church lay so close to the river that it has been engulfed by its waters, probably through erosion of the bank, and the foundation was for a long time still visible at the bottom of the stream.⁴¹ It appears to have stood on the east side of Weyanoke Point on James River, at the lowest

⁴⁰ See page 21.

⁴¹ Saunders, *Westover Church*, 19.

edge of the cypress swamp and five eighths of a mile due south of the colonial Lower Weyanoke mansion house, which is still standing.

A tombstone from this ancient churchyard was removed in 1875, for preservation, to St. Paul's Church, Norfolk, by its rector, the Reverend N. A. Okeson, who had previously served Westover Parish in that capacity. This tombstone has been set into the brickwork of the south wall of St. Paul's Church, near its west end. It is that of William Harris, who died in January, 1687/8, and it apparently came from the chancel of the older building, since the accompanying bronze tablet records that it was "brought from Weyanoke on James River, where it was found among the ruins of an old colonial church."

When Weyanoke Parish was dissolved in 1720, and its territory north of James River was added to Westover Parish, this ancient church became the first Middle Church of the enlarged parish of Westover.⁴² There is no record of its replacement, either before or after the above date, or of its survival after the Revolution, and it seems probable that it continued in service until it became unsafe and was then abandoned, perhaps at the construction of a new brick Lower Church for the parish in 1738.

All of the more important plantations of the original Charles City County constituted parishes, in the beginning, but the first evidence of official recognition of their status as such is recorded in connection with Westover. This record occurs in the minutes of the council and general court of colonial Virginia for 9th January, 1625, and proves that Westover was recognized as a parish by the governor and council at that early date, but that its religious services were then being held at a private house, no parish church having yet been built.

The minutes mentioned deal with a quarrel between Captain Thomas Pawlett and the Reverend Greville Pooley, which was of sufficient importance to come before the council and general court for settlement. One witness testified that "uppon Sct. Stephens dye in the morninge M^r Pooley and others of the Pshe [parish] being together about the removinge of the Church, M^r Pooley affirmed that Mr. Pawlett desired to have the church removed from M^{rs} Briggs howse to his howse and M^r Pawlett said it was false . . . Then M^r Pooley told M^r Pawlett that he lied, Then M^r Pawlett called him blockheaded parson."⁴³

The parish in question is definitely identified as Westover by the Governor's recognition of the principals in the case as "the one the

⁴² Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 270.

⁴³ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 88.

minister the other the Comander of the Plantacon,"⁴⁴ for Captain Pawlett's commission as "Comaunder of Westover" was renewed by a general court order of 7th March, 1628,⁴⁵ and he is listed as an inhabitant of West and Shirley Hundred in a muster of 1624.⁴⁶ The same list also includes Mrs. Richard Biggs, who was, doubtless, the Mrs. Briggs at whose house these early church services were held. Official recognition of the plantation as a parish is indicated by the Governor's acceptance, in his verdict, of the councillors' suggestion that "M^r Paulett shall . . . Ask M^r Pooley forgiveness before the Congregacon of his own Psh [parish] and that M^r Paulett shall give M^r Pooley five hundred pound weight of tobacco."

Additional testimony as to friction between Mr. Pooley and the commanders of other plantations comprising West and Shirley Hundred indicates that Mr. Pooley also served as minister at these places, on a part-time basis, with his headquarters at Flowerdew Hundred, where he is recorded as living after the Indian massacre of 1622.

It seems most probable that Mr. Pooley's accusation was nearer to the truth than the hot-headed captain was willing to admit, and that it actually was to his house that the church was later "removed," in the accepted colonial usage when divine service was transferred to a new location. It is equally likely that Captain Pawlett was instrumental in having the first church of Westover Parish built on land forming part of the 2000-acre plantation later known as Westover, which he patented in January, 1637/8.⁴⁷ This first known church of Westover Parish stood on the north bank of James River, about a quarter mile west of the present Westover mansion, and three old tombstones still visible in its ancient churchyard suggest a date early in the seventeenth century for its construction, possibly around 1630.

The earliest of these stones, whose timeworn inscription was recorded nearly a century ago by the historian Campbell, but has since weathered completely away, once bore the date 1637 and is the oldest known tombstone in Virginia.⁴⁸ It is that of Captain William Perry, who owned the adjoining plantation of Buckland; but the churchyard was not on his property and his burial there strongly suggests the existence of a church building at that date.

⁴⁴ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 89.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁴⁶ Hotten, *Original Lists of Persons of Quality*, 205.

⁴⁷ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XLVII, 192.

⁴⁸ Campbell, *Bland Papers*, I, 148.

This suggestion is supported by the will of Captain Thomas Pawlett, owner of Westover, which is dated 12th January, 1643/4, and bequeaths "unto the Church of Westover Ten acres of land for ever to lye Forty poles Square . . . which ten acres are to be laid out for the best conveniency of the church."⁴⁹ The wording of this will definitely implies that a church building was already in service at Westover, since the bequest would otherwise have been made to the parish, for the building of a church. At 5½ yards to the pole, an area forty poles square would enclose exactly ten acres and this was to be laid out so as most conveniently to enclose the church. Later references to this land state that it was given as a glebe, the earliest colonial churches frequently having been built on glebe lands.

The second earliest tombstone at the site records the burial of Lieutenant Colonel Walter Aston in 1656 and of his son of the same name, ten years later. The third is that of Theodorick Bland, who died in 1671, six years after becoming the owner of Westover Plantation. Altar tombs of the first William Byrd and his wife, Mary (Horsmanden) Byrd, and of their celebrated granddaughter, Mistress Evelyn Byrd, stand a little east of the older graves, and the tombstone of the Reverend Charles Anderson, rector of Westover Parish from 1692 to 1718, lies south of them. All of the tombs mentioned are now included in the owner's family plot, enclosed by an iron railing. The two handsome altar tombs of Nathaniel Harrison of Berkeley and his wife stand a few yards further west.

The Byrd Title Book, in which are recorded both Captain Pawlett's patent to Westover and his will, also contains an exchange deed of 1701 from James Minge to the first William Byrd for a tract of 217 acres bisecting the Westover lands just west of the church.⁵⁰ Accompanying this deed is a plat of Minge's tract and Westover, made by Minge in accordance with a memorandum of agreement attached to the exchange papers. This plat of 1701 includes the church land, which, it reveals, was then used as a site not only for the church but also for the county court-house, prison and stocks, as well as for a brick brew house. The construction of this court-house and jail has been attributed to Theodorick Bland, who had purchased Westover from Captain Pawlett's heirs in 1665, and whose sons sold it in 1688 to the first William Byrd. This statement in regard to the court-house and jail is found in the Bland Papers, a collection of Bland family documents published by

⁴⁹ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XLVII, 194.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, XLVII, 285.

Charles Campbell, and occurs in a genealogy jointly written by Richard Bland the elder and his son and grandson.⁵¹ Serious doubt is cast on this statement by a Charles City County court order of 1673, two years after Bland's death, designating a new building (put up by the county) as a jail, and setting bounds for this prison which identify it as being at Westover.⁵²

This account also credits Theodorick Bland with the building of a church for Westover Parish and the gift of ten acres as its site. Since the tradition of this gift is directly in conflict with the documentary evidence afforded by Captain Pawlett's will, it cannot be accepted as authentic, but must be set aside as an example of the unreliability of such family legends. It seems probable that the statement attributing to Theodorick Bland the construction of the first Westover Church is equally unreliable, since this church undoubtedly was in existence long before Bland's brief occupancy of Westover, lasting from 1665 until his death in 1671. It is possible, of course, that the church supposed to have been built by Bland merely replaced an earlier church, but the evidence of former foundations in the churchyard on the river bank is not extensive enough to justify a belief that more than one church building occupied this site.

This evidence, as obtained by use of a sounding rod, consists of brick rubble in the ground, but partial excavation has failed to reveal any actual foundations. There are general indications, in the form of a concentration of rubble along a rectangular outline from fifty-five to sixty feet long by half as wide, that the site was once occupied by a church of about this size and shape. This church extended westward from the private graveyard, with its chancel enclosing the three oldest tombstones, and its west end showing traces of what may have been a porch or tower. The presence of cobblestone fragments in the rubble suggests that it may represent the remains of the first Westover Church, since cobblestone footings were only used under the slender foundations of the earliest frame churches built by the Virginia colonists. Several ancient brick tiles, 6 inches square by 1 3/4 inches thick, apparently from the aisle of this old church, are still to be found at the site.

In this connection, it may be significant that, on the Minge plat of the church land at Westover, made in 1701, the central building in the churchyard is labeled "the old Church," suggesting that the origi-

⁵¹ Campbell, *Bland Papers*, I, 148.

⁵² Fleet, *Colonial Virginia Abstracts*, XIII, 79.

nal early seventeenth-century church structure was then still in service. It may also be significant that the plat depicts the church as having a tower, although the sketch is so crude that it might represent merely the conventional surveyor's symbol for a church edifice.

No documentary evidence has been found that the first Westover Church had a tower, but it undoubtedly had a porch of some kind, since the second William Byrd relates, in his recently published secret diary, that he took shelter from the rain in "the church porch," during the funeral of his infant son Parke at Westover in June, 1709.⁵³ This porch may have formed the base of a church tower or it may have been merely a roofed shelter at the church entrance, examples of both types of porch being found in existing colonial church buildings. In either case, it would have been located at the west end of the church.

Colonel Byrd also records in his diary that on the 3rd February, 1710, the Westover vestry ordered the churchyard paled in,⁵⁴ and on the 15th January, 1712, agreed to have a well dug in the churchyard, for the congregation's benefit.⁵⁵ He also mentions with pride, in December, 1710, that the vestry had awarded him "the best pew in the church."⁵⁶ His diary illustrates the undesirability of having a tippling place like "the brick brew house" in close proximity to a church, by several entries recording that Colonel Byrd "took a walk and saw several drunk people in the churchyard."⁵⁷

After 1725, when Westover Parish became coterminous with the present Charles City County, following the loss of all the parish's territory south of the James River, there was no longer any occasion for the parish church to be situated on the river bank for the convenience of parishioners on the opposite shore. A new brick parish church was therefore erected in a more central and convenient location, on the north side of Herring Creek, about 1½ miles due north of Westover mansion. This building, believed to be the second Westover Church, although abandoned after 1805 for nearly thirty years, has survived for more than two centuries and is still in service as the present church of the parish.

The Byrd Title Book, already mentioned, affords important evidence as to the date of relocation of Westover's parish church, through the

⁵³ Wright & Tinling, *Secret Diary of William Byrd*, 188.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 470.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 273.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 174, 324.

following entry: "When the Church was removed from Westover to Herring Creek, the Land which Mr. Paulett left by his Will for the use of the Church was ordered to be sold by Act of Assembly and Colo. Byrd Colo. Carter Sam Harwood and Mr. John Styth were appointed Commissioners for that purpose and they sold what remained of it to M^r John Banister by Lease and Release dated April 5, 1731."⁵⁸ Since the land surrounding the site of the older church would not have been sold until after its successor had been placed in service, this evidently dates the completion of the present Westover Church as not later than 1731.

The act of assembly authorizing the sale of the church land is dated May, 1730, and is entitled "An Act for vesting certain Lands belonging to the Church of Westover Parish, in Trustees to be sold; and for laying out the Purchase Money in other lands, for a Glebe for the said Church, and for improving the same."⁵⁹ This act was prompted by a petition from the Westover churchwardens mentioning, among other considerations, the inconvenient location of the existing glebe of the parish.⁶⁰

The lease identifies the tract sold as "All that Parcel of Land containing by Estimation 8 Acres more or Less surrounding the Church Yard of upper Westover in Charles City County and lying enclosed between the several Lands of him the said William Byrd together with all the several Buildings and Edifices thereon erected." The release describes the land involved as "belonging to the Church of upper Westover Parish (intra alias)" and as "the Parcell of Land lying round the Church Yard of Upper Westover aforesaid (being part of the Lands intended by the sd Act to be sold & disposed of)." The wording of this lease implies that the court-house, jail and brew house were sold with the land but that the church and churchyard were not involved in the transaction.

The county records afford proof that the provisions of the Act of 1730 were carried out, for in 1732, the same four trustees, in whom title to the Westover church lands had been vested, purchased a glebe farm for the parish out of the proceeds of their sale.⁶¹ The glebe land was purchased from Philip Lightfoot and lay just west of the old River Road and a mile and a half below the present Charles City court-house.

⁵⁸ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XLVII, 299.

⁵⁹ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 306.

⁶⁰ McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses, 1727-1740*, 74.

⁶¹ *Charles City County Records*.

The colonial brick glebe house, believed to have been built near the beginning of the eighteenth century, is still standing, under the shade of an ancient tulip tree of enormous size. This glebe, after having served for three quarters of a century as the home of the successive rectors of Westover Parish, was sold in 1807, under the sequestration act of 1802, and is now the property of Mr. Crenshaw.

There is a strong tradition that the old church on the river bank was torn down and moved, brick by brick, by the second Mrs. William Byrd, to a new site on her land at Evelynton. This tradition appears to be based upon a misunderstanding of the colonial form of speech used in the Byrd Title Book, in the phrase "When the Church was removed from Westover to Herring Creek." This expression refers to the removal of the parish church, as an institution, to a new location and does not imply the physical removal of the church building in use at the time. The best proof of this is found in the fact that the same wording is used, in the court minutes previously quoted, to mean the removal of church services for Westover Parish from one private house to another, at a time when no church building existed. It is also found in other colonial records involving the replacement of an old church by a new building on a different site, particularly in a deposition on file at Northampton Court-house, which refers to the "removing of Hungars Church," although the specifications for the new Hungars Church, built several miles away, show that no part of the old building, except its plank ceiling, was utilized in the new one's construction.⁶²

This tradition is definitely refuted by the language of the petition for the sale of the Westover church lands in 1730, which gives, as the principal consideration prompting the sale, the fact "that the Parishoners will shortly be obliged to build a New Church in a more convenient Scituation than the old Church stands in and thereby a small parcell of Land contiguous to the Church yard belonging to the Parish will be of no use."

It is also refuted by a significant entry in Colonial William Byrd's secret diary, recording that, on 4th November, 1740, "Mr. Fontaine came and I bought the old church."⁶³ This transaction reflects the fact that, although the land surrounding the church's site had been sold nine years earlier, upon its replacement by a new church, title to the old building itself was still vested in the parish, and the sale of its materials

⁶² See pages 338, 339.

⁶³ Woodfin & Tinling, *Another Secret Diary of William Byrd*, 113.

could therefore be arranged by the rector, then Mr. Peter Fontaine, with the approval of the vestry.

The fact of the simultaneous existence and separate identity of the old church at Westover and the new church on Herring Creek is conclusively proved by a later entry in Byrd's journal for the same year, stating that, on 12th December, 1740, he "rode to the new church and met my chariot and got home about 3."⁶⁴

Even without such definite disproof as is furnished by the records just quoted, the credibility of this tradition is seriously open to question. Since a colonial church, when superseded by a new building on a different site, was customarily abandoned and left to decay, it seems unlikely that an exception would have been made in this case, for the sake of preserving a building that must have been very close to one hundred years old at time of abandonment. Furthermore, it is evident that the erection of a typical eighteenth century building, like the present Westover Church, could not, in any real sense, represent the "moving" of a seventeenth century church, even though the same materials had been used for both structures.

Another version of the local tradition suggests that Mrs. Byrd had the church "moved" to her land at Evelynnton, because she was tired of having all the worshippers expect to stay to dinner at Westover. Regardless of the exact form taken by the removal, this part of the tradition receives some support from the secret diary of Colonel Byrd, who records in his journal, on the 13th May, 1711, that "After church it rained extremely . . . and I invited the whole congregation to go to our house."⁶⁵ Several entries for the preceding year record his resolution "to break that custom" (of inviting people home after church) "that my people may go to church" and "that our servants may have some leisure" on Sunday.⁶⁶ In spite of this good resolution, his later diary of 1739-40 reveals that he was then still bringing guests home to Westover after services.

Following the construction in 1731 of a new and more central parish church for the enlarged Westover Parish, another new brick church was built in the lower part of the county, close to the site of its predecessor, the first Lower Church of Westover, which had been the former parish church of Wallingford. The complete lack of documentary references to the old Middle Westover Church at Weyanoke, in the later

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁶⁵ Wright & Tinling, *Secret Diary of William Byrd*, 343.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 202, 220.

Charles City records, suggests that this new Lower Church was built to supersede the ancient parish churches of both Wallingford and Weyanoke.

A series of references to the new building, in the county records, indicates that this second Lower Westover Church was completed about 1738. The first of these records is a presentation by the grand jury, dated May in that year, and reads: "We present the Overseer of the new road from John Lides to the New Church."⁶⁷ It is followed by a court order of September, 1738, appointing William Talbot as "Overseer of the road from John Lides to the lower brick church," which identifies the new building as the Lower Church and establishes that it was built of brick.⁶⁸

Evidence that a convenient road had not yet been cut from the newly purchased Westover glebe to the site of the Lower Church is afforded by a further action of the September, 1738, court, in referring to the next court "The Motion of the Rev^d Mr. Peter Fontain for a road from his house to the Lower Brick Church."⁶⁹ This record suggests that Mr. Fontaine was then occupying the new glebe, since a road to the old Lower Church, from his former residence, must certainly have been in existence during the previous eighteen years of his ministry in the parish.

The site of the second Lower Church of Westover Parish is well-known to county residents, although there seems to have been much confusion as to the identity of the church represented by its ruins, which have been variously attributed to Mapsco Church, Wallingford Church or even old St. Mary's. As already stated in connection with Wallingford Church, whose generally unnoticed remains lie just south of the plainly visible ruins of the second Lower Westover Church, the site is on the southwest side of the present State Route 5, about 6¾ miles east of Charles City Court-house and less than a hundred yards east of Kennon's Creek.

The churchyard surrounding the second Lower Church was once enclosed by a colonial brick wall, topped with a half-round coping of special bricks, some of which remain at the site. This wall was long ago torn down, but the remains of its footings show that the churchyard was fifty yards long, from east to west, by forty yards wide, from north to south, enclosing a little less than a half acre. The northeast

⁶⁷ *Charles City County Orders, 1737-51*, 41.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 55.

corner of the old churchyard now lies under the white stripe painted down the middle of the present State Route 5, which crosses this corner at an angle. The site is three quarters of a mile west of the fork of this route with the old Sandy Point Road, and lies at the top of the slight rise just beyond the second culvert west of the fork, on the way from the Chickahominy River.

According to one of the county's oldest residents, Mr. W. L. Wilkinson, of Byrdwood, the old church's walls were still standing, halfway up to the window tops, as late as sixty years ago, but they have since been completely carried away by persons seeking free building materials. The position of the church building is still clearly indicated by the excavations made in removing its foundation, and its abandonment more than a hundred years ago is witnessed by a century-old beech tree now standing at the site. This tree has taken root on top of the raised embankment which once supported the pavement of the aisle, extending down the center of the church and over to the South doorway, and its trunk measures six feet in circumference at a height of four feet above the ground.

Enough of the church's foundation is still in the ground to show that it was a brick building sixty-one feet long by twenty-eight feet wide, inside the upper walls. The foundation is laid in the customary English bond, and is three brick lengths, or $26\frac{1}{2}$ inches, in thickness, indicating upper walls about 22 inches thick. The church building lay approximately in the center of the churchyard.

A series of references to roads leading to the Lower Church of Westover Parish, found in Charles City deeds of 1791-1802, show that, by this period, the church's site was near the center of a network of highways radiating from it to the important points in the county, and it remains so to this day.⁷⁰ These records also suggest that this church was then still in service, but it seems probable that its use terminated soon afterward, with the death, about 1805, of the Reverend Sewell Chapin, the last recorded rector of the eighteenth-century Westover Parish.

Sufficient support for this probability appears to be found in Bishop Moore's report to the Diocesan Convention of 1832, which contains the statement that, in Charles City, "we have had no comfortable place in which to assemble since my connection with this diocese" (beginning in 1814), supplemented by the remark that in the same county, "Our Zion has been cloaked in sackcloth for the last thirty years."⁷¹ Upon the

⁷⁰ *Charles City County Deeds, 1789-1802*, IV, 58, 132, 183, 313.

⁷¹ Hawks, *Convention Journals of Diocese of Virginia*, 268.

revival of religious services in the parish in 1833, the old Lower Church must have been so ruinous that its restoration to service was not undertaken, a new Lower Church being built only four miles west of the earlier church's site.

Convention reports of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia indicate that religious services in Charles City County lapsed completely after Parson Chapin's death, about 1805, until they were revived in January, 1833, through the sending to the county, as a missionary, of the Reverend Parke Farley Berkeley, who had been admitted to deacon's orders in the preceding February. In the journal of the Convention of May, 1834, Mr. Berkeley reports having preached once a month each in Charles City, Chesterfield, and King William counties and that "Within a few years past an old church . . . has been repaired" in Charles City county.⁷²

The old church thus put into usable condition, even prior to Mr. Berkeley's arrival, was the colonial Upper Westover Church, which was built in 1731 as the second parish church of Westover and had been out of service for a quarter of a century, prior to its repair. It had been desecrated by misuse as a barn, during the latter part of its period of abandonment, and was reclaimed, according to Bishop Meade, principally through the efforts of "the families of Berkeley and Shirley," the Harrisons and Carters. Upon the completion of repairs, Westover Church was consecrated by Bishop Moore in April, 1832.⁷³

The revival of religion in Charles City County soon resulted in the construction of another church building in addition to the restored parish church. In the journal of the Convention of May, 1832, in which Bishop Moore announced the consecration of Westover Church, he also stated that "a second church in the same county will be ready for consecration on my return to Richmond." The Bishop's report indicates that this new church in Charles City County was actually completed by the summer of 1832, but its expected consecration appears to have been delayed for more than two years by two unforeseen obstacles. The first of these was the subscribers' omission to decide upon a religious denomination for the new church, and the second was their lack of title to the site, since a new Episcopal church cannot be consecrated until a clear title has been obtained to the lot and building.

Both of these obstacles were removed in 1834, upon the gift of the church site by Mr. Collier H. Minge, in a deed dated the 20th May

⁷² *Ibid.*, 289.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, I, 268.

in that year.⁷⁴ This is apparent from the premises of this deed, which state that "a portion of the Citizens of Charles City county have by subscription caused a building, to be used for the purposes of divine worship, to be erected upon the lands of the said Collier H. Minge to be dedicated to such Church of Christians as a majority of the subscribers should determine upon," and that "a great majority of the subscribers have determined to make the Church aforesaid a Protestant Episcopalian Church."

In accordance with the subscribers' decision, the new church became the third Lower Church of Westover Parish and was consecrated as such by Bishop Moore, in November, 1834.⁷⁵ It was a small frame building, of unrecorded dimensions, and stood about three miles east of Charles City Courthouse, on the north side of the ancient road to Sandy Point. Since its site lay between this road and Mapsico Creek, it became known as Mapsco (or Mapsico) Church and appears to have been the first church known by that name. Beginning in 1841, it appears in the parish vestry book as St. Thomas' Church, but the earlier title continued in general use, according to one of the older communicants of the parish.

This third Lower Church of Westover was accidentally burned to the ground on Christmas Eve, 1854, and was replaced on the same site by a fourth Lower Church, consecrated by Bishop Johns in 1856 as Mapsico Church.⁷⁶ This building is still standing but has been out of use since about 1920, when regular services were also suspended at Grace Church, Granville, a small frame chapel consecrated in 1890 for the upper part of the county, leaving old Westover as the only active church in the parish.

The existing Mapsico Church is a frame building, fifty feet three inches by thirty-two feet nine inches, outside, and its exterior is notable for architectural distinction, considering the simplicity of the design and materials. Through the abandonment of the ancient county road past its site, the church was, until not long ago, quite inaccessible by motor car. It is now easily reached over a new road recently built by the Civilian Conservation Corps on a new grade parallel to the old one, which had been cut too deep into the soil, by many years of service, to be any longer usable.

⁷⁴ *Charles City County Deeds, 1832-38, VIII.*

⁷⁵ Hawks, *Convention Journals of Diocese of Virginia*, 317.

⁷⁶ Saunders, *Westover Church*, 83.

Extended research into colonial records dealing with Charles City County has failed to reveal any basis for belief in either a colonial Mapsco Church or a Mapsco Parish. It appears that the popular tradition, identifying the colonial second Lower Westover Church as Mapsco Church, is based on Bishop Meade's largely erroneous story of Charles City County. In the preparation of his story, written in 1857, soon after the completion of the second Mapsco Church, the Bishop, having heard the name "Old Mapsco Church" applied to the first of these two modern churches, built in 1832, seems to have been misled into the assumption that this older building was the colonial Lower Church of Westover. The account quoted by the Bishop as having been given to him by a former county clerk, which describes the division of Charles City into two parishes, Mapsco and Westover, is also completely erroneous.

Although badly wrecked by Federal troops, through their misuse of the building as a stable during the Civil War, old Westover Church was once more restored to service in 1867. It is recorded in the vestry book that not a door, window or floor was left in the church after the war, and the necessary repairs included the replacement of all interior woodwork, as well as the construction of a gallery over the west doorway and of a narrow vestry room back of the chancel.

Westover Church stands to this day on the high bank west of Herring Creek, in a grove of fine old black walnut trees, flanked by large sycamores, hackberries and honey locusts. The church is a typical eighteenth-century structure, built of colonial brick laid in Flemish bond, with glazed headers. Its inside dimensions are about sixty feet six inches by twenty-eight feet, and the upper walls are nearly twenty-two inches thick. The main entrance is at the west end, and there was the usual south doorway, which has been converted into a window, so that there now are four windows in each of the north and south sides. It seems probable that there were originally two windows in the east end, but modern alterations to the chancel have destroyed all trace of them. The aisle was paved with flagstones, three feet long and in random widths, and was evidently six feet across. Many of the flagstones have survived, and some of them form part of the walk leading to the church, while others are similarly used around the rectory. The churchyard was once enclosed by a colonial brick wall, which was torn down during the Civil War or just before it.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Saunders, *Westover Church*, 84, 86.

At the old church's final restoration to service, following the Civil War, the original west doorway, of classic pedimented type, with rubbed brick trim, was found to be so badly damaged that its remains were covered with a heavy coat of stucco. The outline of the cement evidently agrees with that of the original brick trim, and this is confirmed by the surrounding brickwork, which shows the narrow "closure" bricks, always fitted at the sides of such doorways. Below the water table, three courses of the rubbed bricks forming the right hand pilaster have survived, revealing that this pilaster was only twelve inches wide. This accounts for the narrowness of the doorway, which is some eighteen inches less in width than others of the same type. Plate 14 shows the probable original appearance of this west doorway, which has never been restored.

CHAPTER IV.

Prince George and Dinwiddie County Churches

HAVING LONG been the frontier of the original corporation and county of Charles City, the present county of Prince George has played a primary part in the settlement of the Virginia colony south of the James River. Several other counties were formed from Prince George's territory and, of these, Dinwiddie is the last and the only one that adjoins the parent shire.

Most of the colonial churches in these two counties were simple frame buildings and have long since disappeared. Two of the very few colonial brick churches in this region have survived and the earlier of them may well be the oldest colonial church still standing in Virginia. A large part of the older county's records was destroyed during the Civil War, but an eighteenth-century vestry book and register have been preserved for its principal parish. Dinwiddie's colonial records were destroyed by fire, about 1823.

The territory comprising the present Prince George and Dinwiddie Counties once formed a part of Charles City Corporation, one of the four great administrative areas into which the infant Virginia colony was organized in 1618.¹ This corporation, extending from James City on the east to Henrico on the west, on both sides of the James River, became Charles City County in 1634, as one of the eight original shires into which the colony was subdivided in that year.² In accordance with a later tendency to bound counties at the main rivers, instead of at the watershed ridge between such streams, Charles City County was divided at the James River in 1702 and its southern portion became Prince George County.³

The new county extended indefinitely to the southwest, without any exact boundary dividing it from the similar extension of Surry County. The development of parishes throughout this territory antedated its subdivision into counties and set the pattern for this subdivision. First among these parishes were Weyanoke and Bristol, both of which appear to have been organized in the year 1643. After this

¹ Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London*, I, 100.

² Henning, *Statutes at Large*, I, 224.

³ *Ibid.*, VIII, 223.

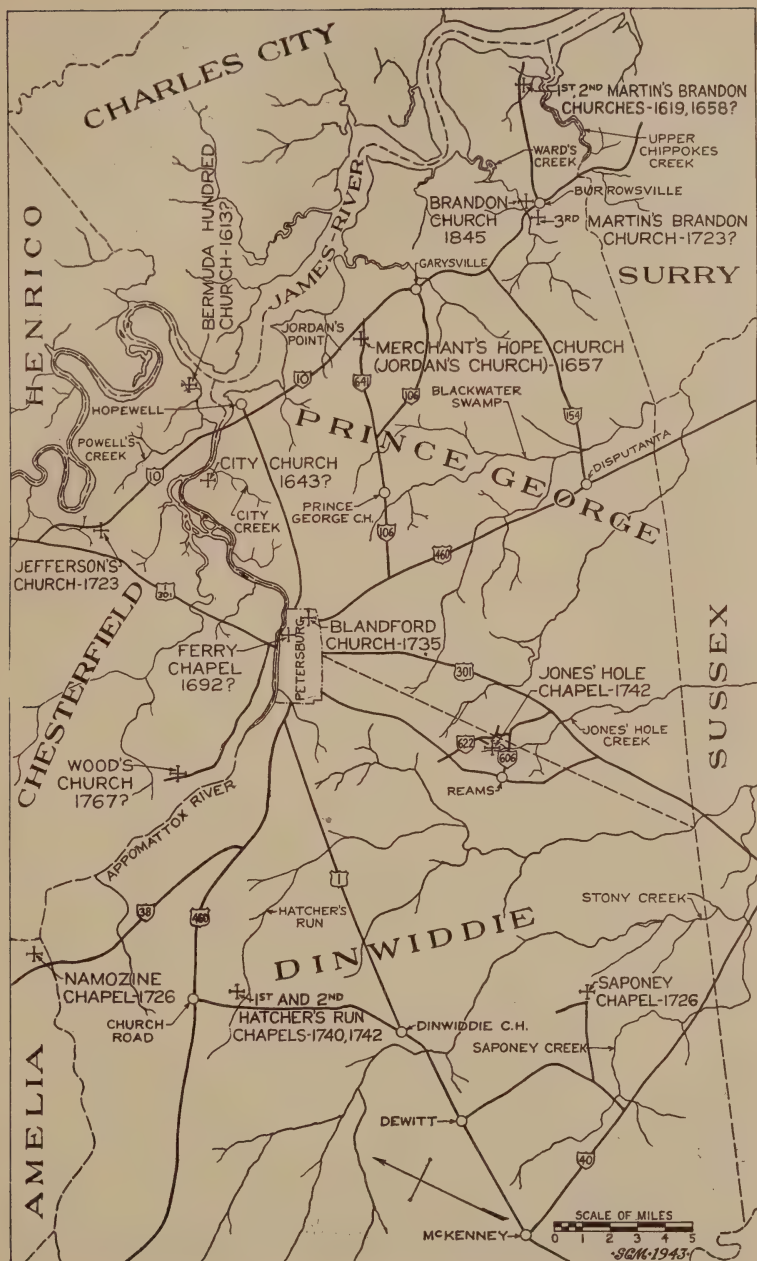


PLATE 15. Map of Prince George and Dinwiddie Counties.

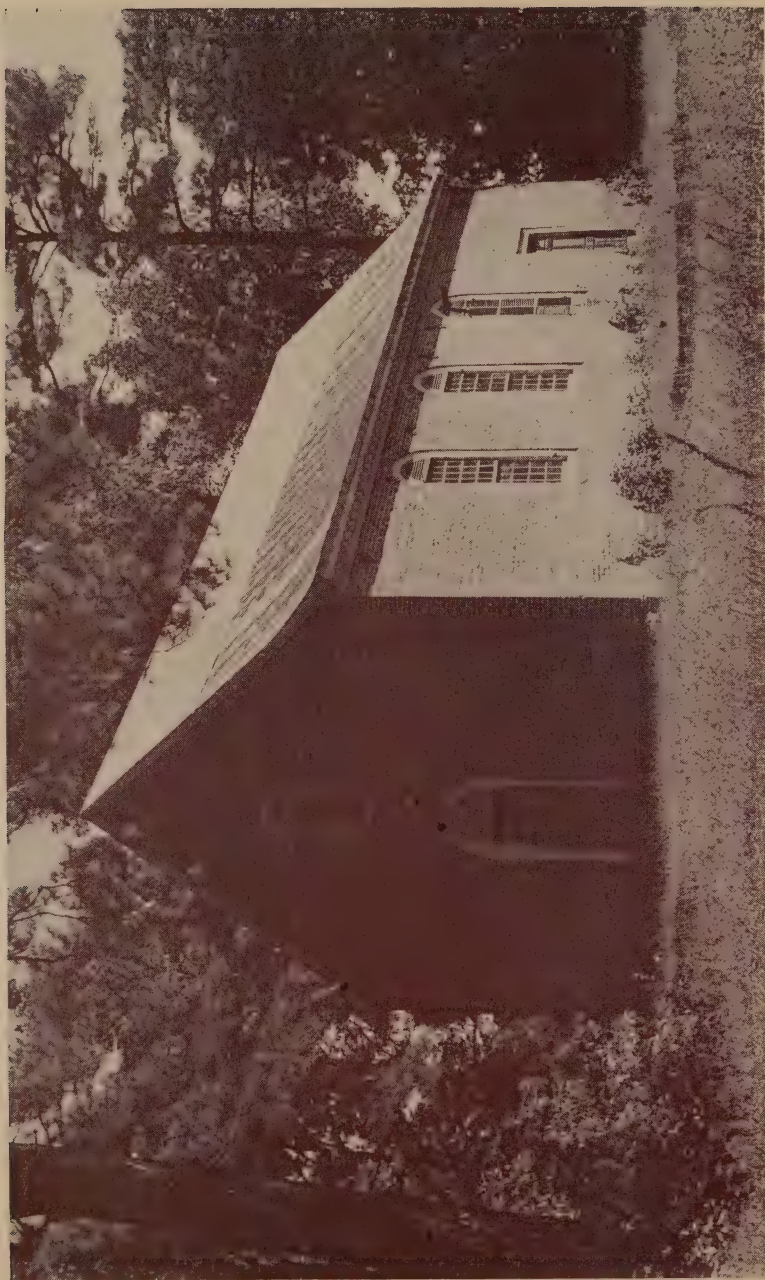


PLATE 16.

Merchant's Hope Church.

date, Charles City County south of the James was composed of Weyanoke Parish, extending from Upper Chippokes Creek to Flowerdew Hundred; Westover Parish, between Weyanoke Parish and the mouth of the Appomattox River; and Bristol Parish, lying on both sides of the Appomattox and extending to the limits of the county.

Within this southern section of Charles City County, now Prince George, two new parishes were erected in 1655, the eastern part of Weyanoke Parish being set up as Martin's Brandon Parish⁴ and the western part of Westover Parish becoming Jordan's Parish.⁵ The last-named parish was reunited with its parent organization in 1688, after a brief separate existence of only thirty-three years.⁶ In 1720, when the rest of the Charles City parishes (except Wilmington) were combined with Westover Parish, the other Prince George parishes (except Bristol) were united with Martin's Brandon Parish.⁷

The indefinite southwestward extension of Prince George County, together with part of Brunswick County, was cut off by an act of 1734 as Amelia County.⁸ By the terms of this act, the corresponding area of Bristol Parish, combined with part of St. Andrew's Parish in Brunswick and extending to "the great Mountains" of the Blue Ridge, became Raleigh Parish. In the same year of 1734, Bristol Parish west of the Appomattox was united with all of Henrico Parish south of the James to form Dale Parish⁹ and the new parish was cut off from Henrico County in 1749 as Chesterfield County.¹⁰ The final reduction in Bristol Parish's area occurred in 1742, when its western portion was cut off to form Bath Parish,¹¹ which, with a slight deviation from its eastern boundary, became Dinwiddie County in 1752.¹² A strip of territory, along the eastern side of Bath Parish, was returned to Bristol in 1745, to equalize the division of the population between the two parishes.¹³

Martin's Brandon plantation was established by Captain John Martin in 1618, on the south bank of the James River and just west

⁴ *Charles City County Records, 1655-65*, 3.

⁵ McIlwaine, *Journal of House of Burgesses, 1619-59*, 95.

⁶ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council, I*, 512.

⁷ *William and Mary Quarterly (2)*, XVIII, 115.

⁸ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 266.

⁹ *Ibid.*, IV, 443.

¹⁰ Robinson, *Virginia Counties*, 208.

¹¹ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, V, 212.

¹² *Ibid.*, VI, 254.

¹³ *Ibid.*, V, 261.

of Upper Chippokes Creek, the lower boundary of Charles City Corporation and of the later county of the same name. Martin's Brandon seems to have had the status of a plantation parish from its first settlement, since a land patent for this historic tract, dated 1711, reserves "200 acres of sd land formerly given as a glebe to the Parish of Martin Brandon; under order of court to Capt. John Martin of 1643."¹⁴

According to the Reverend G. MacLaren Brydon, historiographer of the Diocese of Virginia, each plantation parish was sufficiently divided from the next one by the intervening wilderness and it either formed the nucleus of a larger parish of the same name or was absorbed by the development of some adjoining parish.¹⁵ In this case, Martin's Brandon was included within the bounds set for Weyanoke Parish by an act of 1643, which provided that these bounds should extend, not only along the north shore of the James, but also "over the river to fflowerday hundred and so downe the river on that side the water unto Chippokes Creek where Charles City county endeth."¹⁶

The final establishment of Martin's Brandon as a separate parish was brought about by a Charles City County court order of 4th June, 1655, authorizing, "according to a former order of Assembly, that Martin's Brandon neck, vidzt, from Ward's Creek to Chepokes Creeke and the Inhabitants therein shall from henceforth be an absolute distinct pish [parish] of themselves, wth all Immunities and privileges of a pish, without relacon to Weynoke pish or any other".¹⁷ The "former order of Assembly" mentioned must have been one of a series of enactments of that period, directing the county commissioners to divide their counties into parishes.

The first church of Martin's Brandon Parish is believed to have stood in a field still called the Church Pastures, at a spot a hundred yards southeast of the road leading into Brandon plantation and less than a quarter mile southwest of a small branch of Upper Chippokes Creek. That this church was erected at an early period of the plantation's existence is evident from the fact that it was no longer fit for service by the time that Martin's Brandon became a separate parish in 1655. This is established by the wills of two of its prominent parishioners, John Westhrope and John Sadler, who died in 1656 and

¹⁴ *William & Mary Quarterly* (1), XX, 219.

¹⁵ Brydon, *Parish Lines in Diocese of Virginia*, 4.

¹⁶ Henning, *Statutes at Large*, I, 251.

¹⁷ *Charles City County Records, 1655-65*, 3.

1658, respectively, leaving large sums of money and tobacco for the repair of their parish church. Sadler was one of a number of associates who acquired Martin's Brandon in 1643 and Westhrope was his son-in-law.¹⁸

Since Westhrope's will, dated 24th September, 1655, and proved 12th June, 1658, bequeaths to the church of Martin's Brandon in Virginia "2000 lbs of Merchantable Tobacco and Caske toward the Repairing or the building up of a new Church, provided always the said Church be built upon the same ground or place the said Church now stand on", it seems probable that the first Martin's Brandon Church was completely rebuilt or replaced by a new church on the same site, about 1658. John Westhrope also left to the parish his great Bible, a book of Bishop Andrews' sermons and 1000 lbs. of tobacco "to bye a Communion Cupp". At last report, this Bible, a folio edition of 1639, and the communion cup were still in the possession of Merchant's Hope Church in the present Brandon Parish.

The last colonial church of Martin's Brandon Parish is known to have stood at the present village of Burrowsville. The site pointed out for this church, by older residents, lies three eighths of a mile east of Ward's Creek and on the south side of the modern State Route 10, opposite the existing Brandon Church. This is believed to have been "the New Church near Warren's Mill", at which Colonel William Byrd met his men, on his way to run the Virginia-Carolina dividing line in 1728, as related in his history of the expedition.¹⁹ There was a mill on Ward's Creek at the present Burrowsville throughout the colonial period, as far back as 1650, and "Warren's" appears to have been a mistake for "Ward's," which is no worse than other similar errors in the same volume.²⁰

On this basis, the new church mentioned was built for Martin's Brandon Parish, out of the increased revenues resulting from this parish's enlargement in 1720, so as to include all of the south bank of James River in Prince George County. This building was of frame construction and it seems probable that it was erected about 1723 as the third church of Martin's Brandon Parish. It was abandoned for many years after the Revolution and disappeared after 1856, when

¹⁸ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XV, 56.

¹⁹ Boyd, *Byrd's Dividing Line Histories*, 143.

²⁰ Cf. "Marston" for "Marsden" and "Godding" for "Godwin" on pages 39 and 35 of Byrd's work.

it was replaced by the existing Brandon Church, a modern brick structure on the opposite side of the highway.

When Martin's Brandon Parish was expanded in 1720, by act of assembly, its "freeholders and housekeepers" were ordered to "meet at their Upper Chappell . . . and there elect Twelve . . . Vestrymen" for the enlarged parish, four from each of the three parishes combined.²¹ This Upper Chapel was the old brick building still known as Merchant's Hope Church, which, judging from the date 1657, cut in one of its massive rafters, was completed in that year as the first parish church of the new Jordan's Parish, erected two years before out of the western part of Westover Parish south of the James River. Its quaint name is derived from that of the ancient plantation on which it stood, which was patented before 1635 by William Barker, John Sadler, Richard Quiney and others of the same group that acquired Martin's Brandon in 1643.²²

Merchant's Hope apparently was the same property that was held by Captain John Martin in 1620, under the name of Martin's Hope²³, which seems to have been modified into its later form, even prior to 1635, when the plantation came under new ownership. When it is remembered that colonial Englishmen pronounced "merchant" as "marchant", the transition from "Martin's" to "Merchant's" appears an easy one, and there are many colonial records in which both Martin's Brandon and Martin's Hundred are given as "Merchant's" Brandon and Hundred, instead. It may be noteworthy that, in the Barker patent of 1635, the plantation is mentioned as "Marchant's Hope". It appears to have included 5000 or more acres in a long strip of land across the heads of Powell's, Bailey's and Charles City Creeks.

A bark called the Merchant's Hope brought many English colonists to Virginia in 1634-5, at the time that Merchant's Hope was first patented under that name, and some have assumed that the plantation must have been named after this ship. There appears to be no evidence directly connecting the two names and it seems more probable, if any such connection existed, that the ship was named for the plantation.²⁴

²¹ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVIII, 115.

²² Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 35.

²³ *Ibid.*, I, 226.

²⁴ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, II, 422; IV, 107; XI, 149.

The earliest documentary record of Jordan's Parish appears to have been an enactment of 1655, establishing its limits, as follows: "The Bounds of Jordan's: It is ordered that the bounds of Jordan's . . . begin upon Bristol and so extend downward to Buckar's Creek".²⁵ This does not seem to represent the creation of Jordan's Parish, but probably followed its formation by a county court order of the same year. This order defines the new parish as extending from Bristol Parish, at the mouth of the Appomattox River, down the James River shore to the present Bicker's Creek, on the east side of Jordan's Point. This creek is believed to have been named for Master William Bickers, who was killed there with four other colonists in the Indian massacre of 1622.²⁶

It is apparent from several colonial records that both Westover and Jordan's Parishes extended across the heads of Martin's Brandon and Weyanoke Parishes to the Surry line. The first of these records, an act of assembly of March, 1661/2, confirms a previous enactment "that uninterested persons of the County of Charles City should determine and fix the bounds between the two parishes of Westover and Martin Brandon", which could not have adjoined each other unless Westover had extended back of Weyanoke Parish into proximity with Martin's Brandon.²⁷

That Jordan's Parish and hence, presumably, Westover, also extended back of Martin's Brandon is strongly suggested by a Surry County court order, referring to the old highway still called the Sussex Road as "the Antient Main Road that used to go from the Nottoway River Chappel into Jordans".²⁸ This order is dated in 1715, more than a quarter century after Jordan's had ceased to exist as a separate parish, indicating a persistence of the parish name, to designate the area formerly included within its bounds. A similar persistence is apparent in the will of John Poythress of Prince George County, which was endorsed "Jordan's" by the colonial clerk who recorded it in 1724, thirty-six years after that parish's reunion with Westover.²⁹

Construction of a parish church for Jordan's Parish was evidently under way by September, 1655, when the Charles City County court

²⁵ McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses*, 1619-59, 98.

²⁶ The name Bickers is variously spelled in colonial documents.

²⁷ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, II, 161.

²⁸ *Surry County Orders*, 1713-18, 55.

²⁹ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XIX, 428.

"ordered that . . . the estate of Robt Llewellyn mercht pay Mr Anthony Wyatt for the use of Jerdons parish five pounds sterl[ing] money for the buriall of Peter Midleton late agent of the sd Llewellyn in the sd parish Church".³⁰ Early colonial churches were often used for services long before their completion and could be used for burials as soon as the foundation was laid.

The existence of Merchant's Hope Church during the separate lifetime of Jordan's Parish is further attested by the will of Robert Wynne "of Georges Plantation in Jordan's Parish in Charles City County", dated 1st July, 1675, and proved 15th August, 1678, which directs his body "to be buried in Jordan's Church near son Robert".³¹ It is also confirmed by a Charles City court order of 10th November, 1665, directing that a culprit be "whipt by the Constable . . . neere the Church at the publick meeting of the Congregacon wth twenty lashes", on successive Sundays, "at Westover, Jordan's, Martin's [Brandon] and Weyanoke", clearly implying that these four churches were in service in Charles City County at that date.³²

The reunion of Jordan's Parish with its parent parish is recorded in the journal of the colonial Council for 25th April, 1688, by the brief entry: "Governor unites Westover and Jordan's Parish by consent of parishioners".³³ Following this reunion, Merchant's Hope Church became a chapel of ease of Westover Parish and automatically assumed the status of the Upper Chapel of Martin's Brandon, when it was included within the enlarged parish of that name in 1720.

The old church suffered the usual period of abandonment during the decline of religion in Virginia, following the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, and the equally inevitable desecration during the Civil War, which left it completely stripped of its colonial interior woodwork. Because of the poverty of this region after the war the empty building's final repair and restoration to service, shortly before 1870, was accomplished at the minimum expense and its present interior is of the simplest character. It has recently been repaired and attractively redecorated and is in regular use by an Episcopal congregation.

³⁰ *Charles City County Orders, 1655-58*, 15.

³¹ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XIV, 173.

³² *Charles City County Orders, 1664-65*, 602.

³³ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Ccuncil*, I, 512.

After almost three centuries of service, ancient Merchant's Hope Church still stands in the pine woods, on the north side of the old River Road, ten miles east of the present city of Hopewell and one and one half miles inland from James River. The relocation of this colonial highway, as part of the modern State Route 10 to Hopewell, has left the old building in complete seclusion on a side road, which crosses the highway $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of the Garysville fork and continues south, past the church, to a junction with State Route 106 to Petersburg.

Merchant's Hope Church is constructed of red colonial brick in Flemish bond, with glazed headers, and measures about sixty by twenty-five feet, inside the upper walls, which are $22\frac{1}{2}$ inches, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ brick lengths, thick. There are four round-topped windows in the north side of the church, three in the south side and two in the chancel end, with a smaller window high in the west end to furnish light to the gallery there. The main entrance doorway in the west end wall has plain circular-arch trim, without pilasters, and the south or chancel doorway is square-headed, with a simple jack-arch trim. Both arches are of rubbed red brick, set off by alternate glazed headers. The roof has an interesting "swag" or "kick-up" at the eaves and the aisle is still paved with the original English flagstones.

If Merchant's Hope Church was actually built in 1657, which appears entirely probable, although it still remains to be proved, this ancient structure has strong claims to being considered the oldest colonial church still standing in Virginia today.

The antiquity of Merchant's Hope Church has been questioned by some who consider its design too modern for the supposed period of erection. Inasmuch as there is no existing colonial church structure in Virginia, to which a seventeenth-century date of construction can be assigned with complete certainty, there seems to be little basis for any positive judgment as to what may or may not constitute an appropriate design for a church of this period. It might, therefore, be wiser to modify preconceived ideas on the subject to agree with such a probable example as Merchant's Hope Church, the simplicity of whose architectural details seems in perfect keeping with seventeenth-century colonial brickwork, as exemplified by the earliest dwellings on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

The earliest development of the territory which later became Bristol Parish is closely linked with that of Bermuda Hundred, founded by Sir Thomas Dale in 1612. This pioneer settlement included eight

square miles, fronting on the James River from Rochdale down to the mouth of the Appomattox, and on the north side of the latter stream to about the Point of Rocks, and was enclosed on the west by a stockade extending from river to river.³⁴ In the winter of 1612/13, Dale built the town of Charles City, opposite Bermuda Hundred on the south side of the Appomattox, and common lands were laid off above and below its site.³⁵ During the next decade, lands on both sides of the Appomattox River, as far upstream as Puddledock and Old Town Creeks, were first seated as communal farms and later patented by individuals. This region is described as "the plantation upon Appomattocks" or "the upper precincts of the Corporation of Charles City," in the earliest colonial records.

In the Indian massacre of 1622, the settlement on the Appomattox was almost completely wiped out, about two thirds of the settlers in the valley being slain. The town of Charles City was largely deserted and the survivors from Bermuda Hundred and the Appomattox valley were moved for safety to Shirley and Jordan's Journey, on the James. Although some of the survivors and a few new settlers re-occupied much of the cleared land on the lower six miles of the river, shortly after the massacre, permission for the general settlement of the Appomattox Valley was not granted until 1634, when a temporary camp for defense against the Indians was set up by Captain Henry Fleet and Lieutenant Francis Poythress at Fleet's Hill in the present town of Ettricks. Following the colonists' establishment of Appomattox Town, at the head of navigation for sea-going vessels, about this time, the Appomattox valley from the river mouth to the falls was completely taken up and seated by 1638.³⁶

With the increase of population resulting from this settlement, it became desirable to organize the plantation as a separate parish and this was accomplished by an act of assembly dated 2nd March, 1642/3, setting up this area as Bristol Parish.³⁷ The new parish was named after the British west-coast port of Bristol, with which the Virginia colonists always had close commercial relations. This act reads as follows: "Be it enacted and confirmed for the conveniency of the inhabitants on both sides of Appomattock River being farr remote from the parish church of the said plantation upon Appo-

³⁴ Smith, *General History of Virginia*, II, 6.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 13.

³⁶ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, L, 141.

³⁷ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 251.

mattock [that they] be bounded into a parish by themselves as followeth, to beginn at Causon's Field within the mouth of Appomattock River on the eastward side and at Powells Creek on the westward side of the river, and so to extend up the river to the falls on both sides and the said parish to be called by the name of Bristol".³⁸

The wording of this enactment clearly implies that the plantation upon the shores of the Appomattox, thus set up as Bristol Parish, originally formed part of a larger parish, whose parish church was "farr remote" from the inhabitants of the plantation. It seems certain that this larger organization was the plantation parish of Bermuda Hundred, whose settlement was closely linked with that of the Appomattox River plantation. From the fact that Sir Thomas Dale, immediately after his establishment of Henrico, erected a frame church there and laid the foundation of a larger one of brick, it seems assured that he also built a church at Bermuda Hundred.³⁹ This view is supported by the fact that the Reverend Alexander Whittaker is reported, in a contemporary record, to have officiated at both Henrico and Bermuda Hundred in 1613.

The only documentary reference to such a church appears to be found in a patent of 30th January, 1664, to Mr. Thomas Gagecomb for 150 acres, "Beginning at the hundred poynt, running west into the woods 320 poles to the Court Swamp, south-southeast along the same 40 poles, southeast by east 112 poles to Church Yard . . . part of patent dated 24th July, 1645, granted to Michael Martin".⁴⁰ Other patents for adjoining grants identify this land as being at Bermuda Hundred Point, suggesting that there was a church at Bermuda Hundred when Bristol Parish was created. The same patent also implies that the usual association of church and court existed here in 1660, and it seems probable that it existed in 1645, since the Court Swamp is also mentioned in the earlier patent of that date. The probable location of church and court-house is shown on Plate 17.

It is apparent that a church must have been built for Bristol Parish, soon after its formation, in order to overcome the inconvenience caused by the remoteness of the former parish church, which was cited in the act of 1643 as the chief reason for the new parish's erection. It is also obvious that no church building then existed within

³⁸ The stream mentioned in this act as Powell's Creek is the one called "The Brook" on U. S. Geological Survey topographical map.

³⁹ Hamor, *Present Estate of Virginia 1614*, 30.

⁴⁰ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 439.

the bounds of Bristol Parish, since otherwise this inconvenience would not have been felt. This first church of Bristol Parish is believed to have been built about 1645, near the site of the early colonial town of Charles City and hence was known throughout its existence as the City Church.

Extant county records and land patents and the published works of early colonial writers prove, beyond any reasonable doubt, that the colonial Charles City townsite was not at City Point, as generally believed, but about three miles west of it, up the Appomattox River, at the later colonial townsite of Broadway. This place is on the south bank of the river, eight miles below the present city of Petersburg, as measured along the winding river channel.⁴¹

Early colonial land patents and other records also furnish conclusive proof that, from 1637 until 1824, the creek that empties into the Appomattox River just below Broadway Landing was generally known as "Charles City Creek", more often shortened to "the City Creek".⁴² This creek manifestly was named for the ancient Charles City townsite at this point, and there is strong evidence that an early colonial frame church stood in this vicinity. This is apparent from the fact that, next below Bull Hill plantation, which adjoined Broadway on the east, was the land of John Gilliam and through this Gilliam land, toward the hills in the rear of Broadway, ran a cart road described in records of 1700-1726 as "the City Church Pathe".⁴³ This road must have led to a church known as "the City Church".

Evidence that this church was in service prior to 1700 is afforded by a deed of 1677, from Edward Robinson to Nicholas Dison, Jr., for land on the north side of the mouth of Swift Creek, in the Henrico County section of Bristol Parish, and located "by the church path side".⁴⁴ The land in question lay directly across the Appomattox River from the probable site of the City Church, and no other colonial church is known to have existed in this vicinity. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that the "church path" mentioned in the above deed was an extension of the "City Church Pathe" on the south side of the Appomattox, especially as the earliest licensed ferry across the river was at this point and one was probably operated there from the earliest times.

⁴¹ Gilliam, *Virginia Historical Magazine*, I, 137.

⁴² *Charles City County Records*, 1655-65, 20.

⁴³ *Prince George County Records*, 1713-28, 893.

⁴⁴ *Henrico County Records*, 1677-92, I, 25.

The original town of Charles City was not wiped out in the Indian massacre of 1622, but it is stated, in an official reply to Captain Nathaniel Butler's unfavorable report of the colony in that year,⁴⁵ that "Charles City, so much spoken of, never had but six houses", without any mention of a church.⁴⁶ It therefore seems unlikely, although not at all impossible, that the City Church was built during the active existence of the town of Charles City, which, after 1633, dropped out of the records except as a boundary location in an occasional deed.

The location of this church is known to have been marked on the original plat for the town of Broadway, as founded by Thomas Broadway, who acquired the ancient Charles City townsite in 1700 and laid off lots on the hills above the landing. The late Mr. Richard D. Gilliam (1855-1935) of Petersburg, who spent his boyhood at City Point in 1855-61, recalled this church as a white frame building, resembling the existing Saponey Church, upon the hill above Broadway. He said that it had long been used by other denominations and was taken down by Federal troops in 1865. This is confirmed by the fact that a Confederate military map of this section shows the symbol for a church at Broadway, while Federal maps of the same section, made in 1865-6, show no such symbol.

It seems likely that the City Church was the one mentioned in the following letter, dated 17th April, 1814, from John Randolph of Roanoke to General Thomas M. Forman: "We have here, as well as with you, dismantled country houses &, what is worse, desolate & ruinous churches 'frowning in portentous silence upon our guilty land' . . . I made a late visit to my birthplace. At the end of a journey through the wilderness, I found desolation and stillness of death—the fires of hospitality long since quenched—the hearth cold—& the parish church tumbling to pieces, not more from natural decay than from sacrilegious violence".⁴⁷ Since Randolph's birthplace was Cawson's plantation, only two miles below Broadway, and he reached it by crossing the James River, without having included Petersburg in his trip, it appears probable that his letter does not refer to Blandford Church, as has been supposed, but to the ancient first parish church of Bristol at the historic Charles City townsite.

⁴⁵ Stith, *History of Virginia*, 269.

⁴⁶ Stith, *History of Virginia*, 311.

⁴⁷ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XLIX, 205.

Since Blackwater Swamp and a line from the falls of the Appomattox to Monacan Indian Town on the James remained the official boundary between the English settlements and the Indian country from 1646 to 1691,⁴⁸ the major expansion in size of Bristol Parish did not take place until after the latter date. It therefore seems probable that the City Church remained the only church building in the parish during the above period and that the second church known to have been built for Bristol was erected at its close. This second church, possibly built before 1692, was a chapel of ease, later known as the Ferry Chapel, from its location on the south bank of the Appomattox River, near the ferry from the present Pocahontas to Bolling's Point.

The only colonial vestry book of Bristol Parish, that has been preserved, opens in 1720 and continues until 1789. Although the City Church is not mentioned by name in the opening pages of this vestry book, it must have been still in service as the parish church or the later church at the ferry would not have been designated as a chapel. The title "chapel" was never applied to a parish church, during colonial times, and its use presupposes the existence of another church, of greater importance than the chapel. In this case, both churches appear to be included in a vestry order of 8th November, 1722, that "the Church-wardens take care & rail in the Chappell And the Church" with fences five rails in height.

The Ferry Chapel was almost certainly a frame building and the simplicity of its construction is shown by the fact that it had fixed window sash, which had to be taken down before every service in the summer months and put up again at its close. This is apparent from the vestry book, which records repeated levies to pay the Ferry Chapel's sexton for taking down and putting up the chapel windows. The inconvenience of this arrangement was ended in 1724 by fitting the chapel with sliding sash, a hinged casement being provided for the small window back of the pulpit.

That the Ferry Chapel was the only chapel in service in Bristol Parish in 1720 is evident from the vestry book, which refers to it only as "the Chapel" from that date until 1727. Since two additional chapels were completed for Bristol Parish in the latter year, a more distinctive title became necessary for the older building and it was therefore called the Ferry Chapel, from its situation near the parish ferry. Condemnation proceedings, for the building of the first Poca-

⁴⁸ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, III, 85.

hontas Bridge over the Appomattox River in 1752, show that the site of the Ferry Chapel had to be used for its southern end or approaches. This site lies about where the present Norfolk and Western Railway station at Petersburg now stands and is probably partly covered by the existing bridge.

A strong indication that the parish church of Bristol was old enough to be in urgent need of replacement, as early as 1714, is found in a deed recorded on the 7th September of that year, provisionally conveying to the parish a site for a new church. In this deed, Henry Randolph, Jr., of Henrico County "grants . . . one acre of land in Henrico County, Bristol Parish, on the north side of Swift Creek, to the parish of Bristol . . . In consideration that the said Parish shall build a church on the same & provided that if the said parish does not build the church thereon, this deed shall be void".⁴⁹

The doubt implied in this conveyance, in regard to the parish's acceptance of this gift of a church site, was evidently well-founded, for no evidence has been discovered, either in the vestry book or in any other record, that the proposed church was ever built. Although the replacement of the outworn church of the parish seems to have taken place within the next decade, the new building was actually placed on a different and apparently less central site than that offered by Mr. Randolph.

A new parish church for Bristol was built in 1723, west of the Appomattox River, about two miles inland from James River and a quarter mile north of the head of Redwater Creek. This was built by Captain Thomas Jefferson, grandfather of the president, as shown by a vestry record of 11th November, 1723, that "Capt. Tho. Jefferson producing an Accot for work done to the New Church more than his Agreemt to the vallue of Six thousand pounds tobb. tis ordrd that three thousand pounds tobb . . . be payed unto the s'd Cap Tho. Jefferson in part & it is ordr that there be three thousand pounds of tobb. levied on the P'ish for the s'd Jefferson". In other colonial vestry books the only building ever dignified by the title of "the New Church" was the parish church itself, and there seems to be no reason to doubt that Jefferson's Church was built to serve as Bristol Parish Church.

Since four pages are missing from the vestry book, covering the

⁴⁹ *Henrico County Deeds, 1710-14, 286.*

period from 8th November, 1722, to 11th November, 1723, just prior to the first mention of Jefferson's Church, as quoted above, the order for its erection is lost and nothing can therefore be learned from it as to the size and type of construction of the new building. Its erection must have been ordered within the period of the missing vestry minutes and the order just quoted suggests that it was then nearing completion.

It is known to have been a brick church, since one corner of its ruined wall was still standing, up to the top of a window, until the close of the last century. This wall has since disappeared and even the foundation has been dug up and carried away. The back-filled trenches left by the foundation's removal are still evident at the site and show that the church was about sixty by twenty-five feet, inside the upper walls. There is strong evidence, in the ground, that the building had been enlarged by the addition of a north wing, twenty-five feet square, near the northeast corner of the church, making it L-shaped. The site lies on the west side of State Route 10, seven miles north of Hopewell and about half a mile south of the overpass for the Hopewell branch of the Seaboard Air Line Railway. It is still marked by two colonial tombstones, one of which commemorates the burial of William Ashburn of Liverpool in 1775.

The historian William Stith, who was rector of Henrico Parish in 1747, is authority for the statement that Jefferson's Church occupied the site of Mount Malady, the first public hospital in America. Ralph Hamor, in his contemporary account of the colony's beginnings, describes this hospital as "a guest house for sick people", established by Sir Thomas Dale in 1612, in connection with his settlement of Bermuda Hundred.⁵⁰

The identity of no other colonial church, perhaps, has been so generally misunderstood and misinterpreted as that of Jefferson's Church. The confusion has been aggravated by the fact that, in later times, it was also called Ware Church, Ware Bottom Church, Bottom's Church and Osborn's Church, after the adjacent plantations. Bishop Meade, and other writers after him, erroneously identified Jefferson's Church as the chapel ordered to be built for Bristol Parish, under an act of assembly of 1720. Since this act is given in Hening's *Statutes at Large* only by title, its text was not available to the Bishop, but it has since been found and published, and it shows that this chapel

⁵⁰ Hamor, *Present State of Virginia* 1614, 30.

actually was to be built near Stony Creek, on the opposite side of the Appomattox from Jefferson's Church.⁵¹

Although Bishop Meade was thus aware that Jefferson's Church was built for Bristol Parish and never stood in Henrico Parish, he states that it was "supplied" by the Henrico minister, who officiated alternately at this church and at Curles Church on the opposite side of the James River, according to the bishop's account. He further states that "this was the case in the time of Mr. Stith . . . about the year 1740 . . . when he was minister of Henrico parish".⁵²

As already quoted, Stith mentions Jefferson's Church in his history of Virginia, but he says nothing to substantiate the bishop's claim. Furthermore, it is not supported by the eighteenth-century vestry book of Henrico Parish, which contains no hint of services being held by the parish's rector in any church that can reasonably be identified as Jefferson's Church.

As the supposed use by one parish of a church building in another parish is entirely without precedent in colonial times, when parish lines were rigidly drawn, it seems more probable that the traditional "borrowing" of Jefferson's Church by a Henrico Parish clergyman, as related by Bishop Meade, occurred during the revival of religion in the first half of the nineteenth century. Jefferson's Church appears to have been the old church in Chesterfield County reported by the Reverend Parke F. Berkeley to the Episcopal convention of 1833 as having been repaired and used for mission services in that year. Since this young minister was then carrying on mission work in several counties, with his headquarters at Richmond,⁵³ this may have been the origin of the above tradition.

A significant reference to the "Mother Church", in the Bristol Parish vestry book, has erroneously been cited by Bishop Meade as identifying this church as the Bermuda Hundred Church, which was never in Bristol Parish, from its formation in 1643. It has, also erroneously, been accepted by Slaughter and Chamberlayne as referring to Wood's Church, a colonial frame building situated on the opposite side of the Appomattox River from Petersburg and six miles west of the present Ettricks. This reference occurs in a vestry order of 21st October, 1731, "that a Ferry be keep't at the Point and that it be

⁵¹ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVIII, 115.

⁵² Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 125, 136.

⁵³ Hawks, *Convention Journals of Diocese of Virginia*, 289.

attended when the sermon is at the Mother Church and that the Minr pass when he hath Occation”.

Since Wood's Church could easily have been reached by the parish ferry, recorded by the vestry book as in continuous operation from 1720 to 1735, between the Ferry Chapel at Bolling's or Appomattox Point and the north side of the river at Archer's Point (the present Pocahontas), it is manifest that the special ferry ordered must have been at some other point and that Wood's Church could not have been the church intended to be reached by it. It is traditional that the Reverend George Robertson, rector of Bristol Parish from before 1720 until his death in 1740, lived at Revelans, near the first Bristol Parish Church on the City Creek, and it seems reasonable that this special ferry for the minister's convenience ran from what was later Broadway Landing, near his home, to the Point of Rocks, only four miles' ride from Jefferson's Church.

The confusion in regard to Jefferson's Church's identity arises from a failure to grasp that it was erected as the parish church of Bristol and hence was the "Mother Church" of the vestry book. In colonial usage, the term "Mother Church" did not refer to the original or oldest church of a parish, as it often does today, but was synonymous with "Parish Church" and both of these titles were automatically transferred to the newest church occupying that position.⁵⁴

Incidentally, once Jefferson's Church is accepted as the Mother Church of Bristol Parish, there is no church mentioned in the parish vestry book that can plausibly be identified as Wood's Church. The claim for the latter's antiquity is based solely on Bishop Meade's statement that "During the last repair the workmen discovered on one of the upright beams the figures 1707".⁵⁵ Since he was notably inaccurate in giving dates, it is believed that the date thus found was actually a much later one, perhaps 1767, and that this church was probably a chapel of ease of Dale Parish, possibly one of the two churches built in that year for this parish.

The deed of 1714, previously quoted, for a proposed church site on Swift Creek, also proves that Wood's Church could not have been built

⁵⁴ Note that the third parish church of Lynnhaven Parish, Princess Anne, and the second parish church of Christ Church Parish, Middlesex, are both called "the Mother Church" in the vestry books. Bristol Parish had three Mother Churches during colonial times: (1) the City Church, 1643-1723; (2) Jefferson's Church, 1723-1735; and (3) the Brick Church on Wells' Hill, 1735-1789.

⁵⁵ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 462.

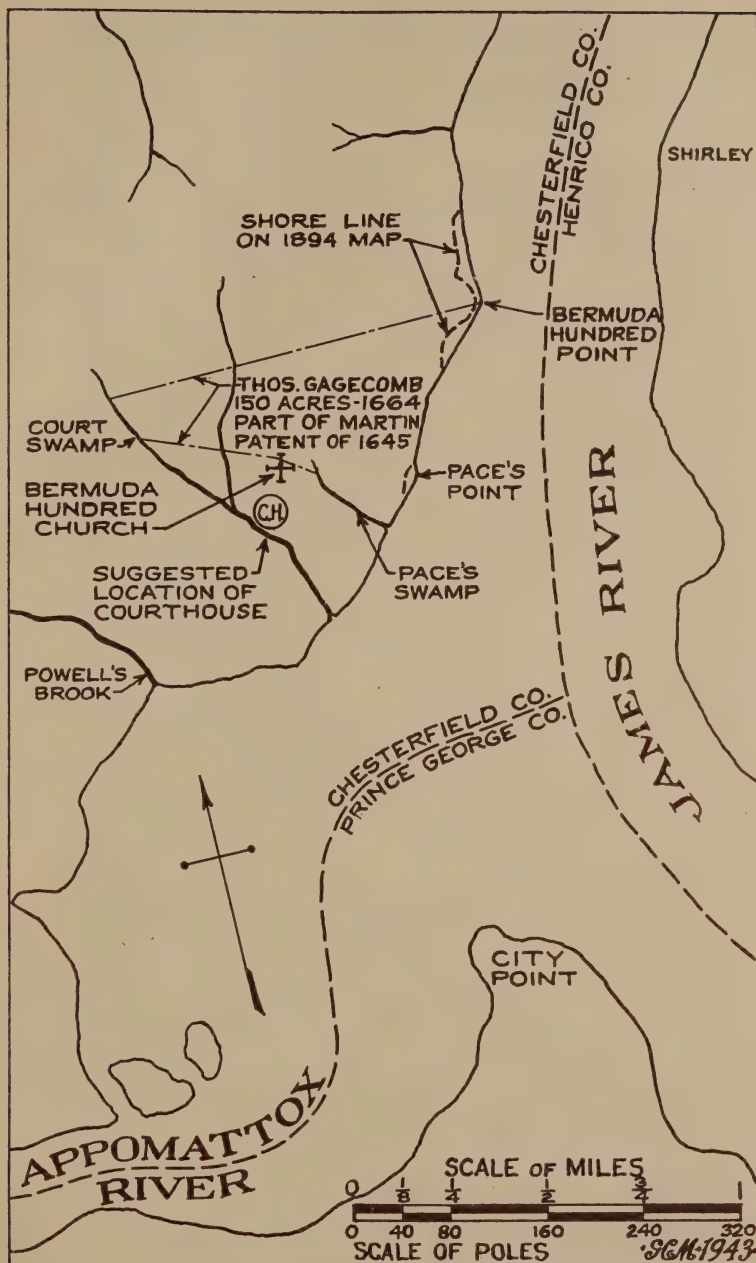


PLATE 17. . . Suggested location of Church and Courthouse at Bermuda Hundred.

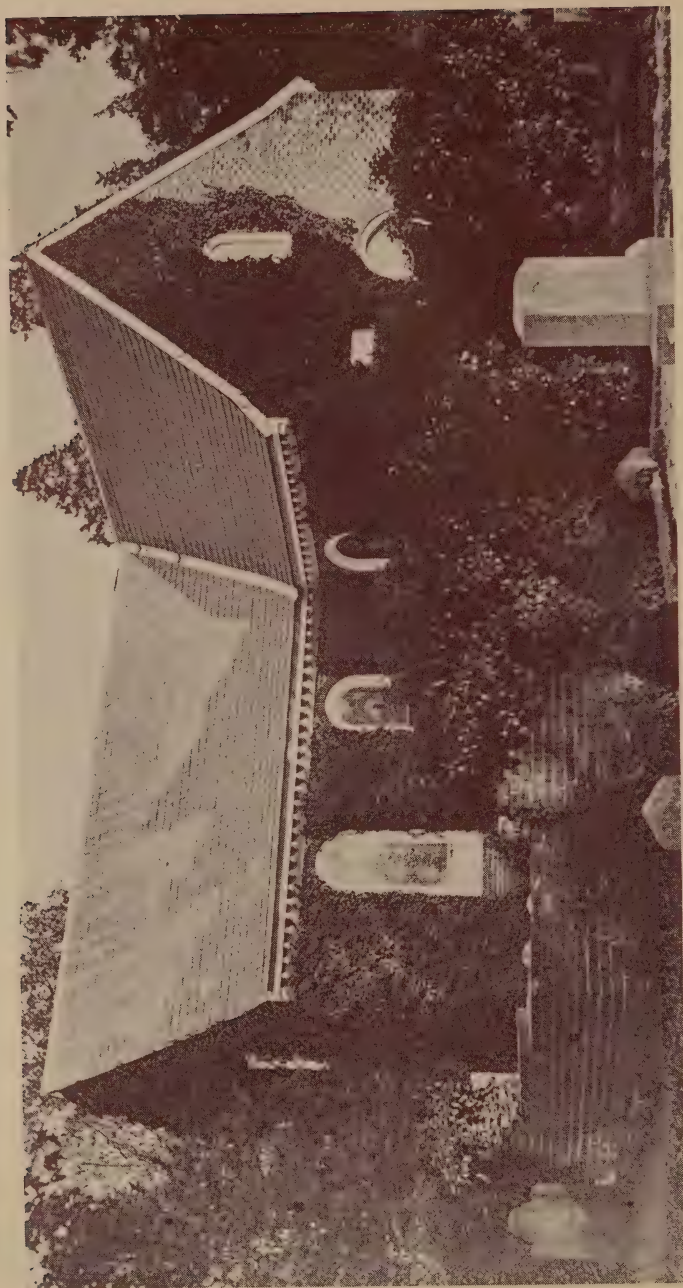


PLATE 18.

Blandford Church, Petersburg.

in 1707, to be the Mother Church of Bristol Parish, as suggested by Slaughter and Chamberlayne, for it is obvious that, if such a church had been built, Henry Randolph could scarcely have expected the vestry to erect another new church on his land, only seven years later.

In returning a questionnaire sent to colonial clergy by the Bishop of London in 1724, the Reverend George Robertson, then rector of Bristol Parish, reported as follows: "I have a Church and Chappel in which I officiate by turns . . . Our Church and Chappel are pretty strong in good weather and very often more present than there are pews for".⁵⁶ It is manifest from the vestry book that the two buildings mentioned must have been Jefferson's Church and the Ferry Chapel and that the ancient City Church had been retired from service or abandoned.

This report in itself therefore constitutes the strongest possible evidence that Wood's Church did not exist as a church of Bristol Parish in 1724, and the vestry record after this date contains not the slightest hint of its construction.

Jefferson's Church was cut off with Dale's Parish in 1735, in accordance with the act of assembly of 1734, and hence became lost to Bristol Parish. Possibly in anticipation of such a loss, since the existing parish church was barely ten years old at the time, the Bristol vestry ordered, on 11th March, 1733/4, "That a new Church be Built of Brick on Wellses Hill for the Conveniency of this Parrish Sixty foot long and twenty five foot Wide in the Clear". On the 4th of May, 1734, Mr. Thomas Ravenscroft agreed to build this church for £485, to be finished by the last of July, 1737, and the building was specified to be "15 foot to the spring of the arch from the floor which is to be at least 18 inches above the highest part of the ground; 3 bricks thick to the water table and 2½ afterward to the plate, the roof to be fram'd according to a scheme now before us, the Isle to be 6 foot wide Lay'd with white Bristol Stone, gallery at the west end as long as the peer will admitt a window in the same as big as the pitch will admitt. 7 windows in the body of the Church of suitable dimentions". Two more windows were later added, presumably in the east end wall.

The decision to build the new church in its present location may have been prompted by an evidently adverse report on the reparability of the old Ferry Chapel, made in accordance with a vestry order of 12th November, 1733. Construction of the new church was

⁵⁶ Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 267.

held up on 12th August, 1735, by order of the Governor, acting in response to a petition alleging that the site chosen for the building by the vestry was "inconvenient to the greater part of the Parish". The petition was adjudged to be groundless and the vestry was authorized to proceed with the erection of the church by an order of council dated 17th October, 1735.⁵⁷

As a result of the cutting off of the major part of the parish territory in 1734, to form the new parishes of Raleigh and Dale, the Bristol vestry found it extremely difficult to finance the building of its new church. This difficulty was aggravated by an act of assembly of August, 1736, requiring Bristol's vestry to reimburse the two new parishes for their share of the first levy toward the cost of the building, on the ground that it was made after the acts forming them were passed, although before these acts became effective.⁵⁸

The acceptance of the new church by the vestry is not recorded, but the final levy toward its cost was made in November, 1736, and the first vestry meeting was held in the new house of worship on 13th August, 1737. It is apparent that the completion of the new parish church threw out of service the ancient Ferry Chapel, situated only a mile away, and no further mention of the earlier building is found in the vestry book.

As a result of the steady growth of population in the parish, the Bristol vestry decided, on 29th July, 1749, to make an addition to the Brick Church. No action was taken to make this decision effective for nearly three years, until 22nd July, 1752, when a wing, thirty by twenty-five feet in the clear, was ordered to be added to the south side of the Brick Church, to be finished by 1st July, 1754. At the same time, the churchyard was ordered to be enclosed by a brick wall extending 160 feet, from east to west, and 140 feet, from north to south. On 30th November, 1752, it was decided to make the addition on the north side of the church, and Colonel Richard Bland agreed to build the new wing and the churchyard wall for £400.

Two years later, Colonel William Poythress was granted permission by the vestry to enclose his family burial place, inside the churchyard, with the curious proviso that he enlarge the churchyard to include its original area (practically half an acre), exclusive of his family plot. The remains of the brick wall enclosing the Poythress burial ground are still visible southeast of the church.

⁵⁷ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council, 1721-39*, IV, 359.

⁵⁸ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 525.

The colonial builder was always leisurely, which may account, in part, for the excellence of his workmanship, but Colonel Bland seems to have been especially deliberate in fulfilling his contract. On the 21st January, 1764, nearly a decade after the date originally set for completion of the addition and churchyard wall, the vestry called upon Colonel Bland to complete his work according to agreement, or they would get someone else to do so. It seems probable that the new wing had actually been in service during most of this period, but it evidently was not finished as specified and it was not until five years later, on 14th October, 1769, that the final payment was made to Colonel Bland for building the addition.

The "Brick Church on Wells's Hill" is the venerable building known today as Old Blandford Church, which still stands in its ancient churchyard on the east side of the present U. S. Route 460, within the limits of the colonial town of Blandford, now a part of the modern city of Petersburg. The use of the name Blandford Church for the old building appears to have colonial precedent, since it occurs in an entry of 1762 in the old parish register, recording the baptism of James Hair at Blandford Church on the 16th of May in that year. The historic building was first called St. Paul's Church between 1785 and 1787, when the vestry minutes record the appointment of a sexton for "St. Paul's Church, commonly called the Brick Church in Petersburg".

Following the construction, about 1791, of a new St. Paul's Church in a more central location in Petersburg, the old Blandford Church was abandoned by its congregation. It was acquired by John Grammer, a member of the parish vestry, by land office treasury warrant, in 1818, and deeded by him to the Town of Petersburg in the following year. During the ensuing half century of utter neglect, the old church gradually approached complete ruin. In 1882 the late William F. Spotswood (1827-1895) finally persuaded the City Council to appropriate the funds required to save the shrine for posterity. Roof, walls and windows were made waterproof, but no restoration of the interior was attempted. The building was turned over to the Ladies' Memorial Association of Petersburg in 1901 and, through their efforts, completely repaired and converted into a memorial to the soldiers of the Confederate States of America, as suggested by its proximity to the Civil War battlefield of the Crater.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ From memorial tablet on west end wall of Blandford Church.

Historic Bristol Parish, having been set up in 1643, two years ago celebrated its tercentenary, commemorating three centuries of continuous service, the parish having remained active even through the general decline of religion during the early years of the nineteenth century, as well as throughout the Civil War.

As in the case of other large colonial parishes, the vestry of Bristol Parish kept pace with the gradual extension of settlement within its boundaries by the successive building of smaller local churches or chapels of ease, the earliest of which was the ancient Ferry Chapel. The first action of this sort recorded in the Bristol vestry book is an order of 23rd November, 1721, "that two Chappells be Built for the Ease & convenience of the frontire Inhabitants of the s'd P'ish (Viz) one on Sapponey Creek near the Bridge. The other on Namosend Creek near the mouth. Both which Chappells are to be of the following dimentions. Fourty foot in len'th twenty foot in breadth twelve foot pitch fram'd on good sills & underpin'd with good Blocks or rock-stones A good substantiall frame, to be weather-borded with good Clap-bords & covered wth shingles. . . . The seats to be single benches, Except the two upper pews & them to be double & close with dores. . . . A common plain gallery A pulpit & reading desk & communion table, with windows & Doors." The double pews mentioned were what are more usually called "great pews" in colonial specifications, the single pews being known as "common pews".

The order for the chapel on Saponey Creek was evidently prompted by the inclusion in the act of 1720 for the enlargement of Martin's Brandon Parish, of a final provision that the Bristol vestry should "with all Convenient Speed cause a decent Chappell . . . to be Erected and built . . . on Stony Creek near the plantation of Joshua Wyn".⁶⁰ This is apparent from the fact that the chapel, as finally built, lay between Saponey and Stony Creeks and hence served the neighborhood specified in the act.

Since no levy was made for the cost of these chapels, the order for their construction was ineffective and was eventually renewed on 28th June, 1725, with the same dimensions and specifications. In the new order, the location of the two chapels is given more exactly, placing "one upon the plantacon of Mr. John Stith upon Sapponey Creek convenient to the upper Nottoway river road" and "The other on the upper side of Numanseen Creek as near the river as it can con-

⁶⁰ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVIII, 115.

veniently be placed". The two streams mentioned are the present Saponey and Namozine Creeks, but, as in most colonial recordings of Indian names, the vestry book employs a different spelling in almost every entry mentioning the second of these creeks.

On 9th August, 1725, Edward Colwell agreed to build the Saponey Chapel for £140 and Richard James undertook to build the Namozine Chapel for £135, both buildings to be finished "at or upon Christmas come twelve Month". The final levy for the cost of the two churches was made on 10th November, 1726, indicating that they were completed on schedule. Church ornaments for both chapels were ordered on the 2nd May, 1727, and a "little house" was built at Saponey Chapel, apparently as a residence for the clerk, rather than as a vestry house, since there is no record of any vestry meeting being held at the chapel. A similar house, sixteen feet by twelve feet, with an inside chimney, was ordered built by the churchwarden for the north side of the parish, later in the same year. The little house at Saponey is probably the one involved in a vestry order of 9th July, 1730, that "Upon the Petition of Nathaniel Parrott that the House he now Lives in neer Sapponey Chappel Standing in an Inconvenient part . . . the Sd house be Removed to Sum more Convenient place for the good of the parrish".

As a result of the increase of settlement in the parish, it was ordered on 12th January, 1729/30, that "an addition of twenty foot be Built to the East End of the two outward Chapples with Doubles Pews &c". The contractors were Henry Baley for Saponey and Major William Kennon for Namozine Chapel. The price for each addition was £70 and both were to be completed by the following Christmas.

The next project for building a new chapel for the parish was undertaken by the vestry on 15th October, 1730, in response to a "Petition of the Remote Inhabitants of this Parrish", by an order for a chapel of ease, forty feet by twenty feet, to be erected between Smack's and Knib's Creeks. On 6th February, 1732, the vestry decided that the "Chappel order'd for the convenience of the Upper Inhabitants of this Parrish be built on or near Mr Samuel Cobbs land on Flat Creek" in accordance with their original order of 15th October, 1730, thus identifying this as the same building.

At a meeting held at the end of February, 1732, at the Namozine Chapel, Richard Booker undertook to build the new Flat Creek Chapel for about £95 and agreed to make it "of the same dimensions as the first chapel built at Nummisseen", that is, the original Namozine

zine Chapel before its enlargement. The contractor was allowed to build himself a family pew in the new church, at his own expense, on one side of the communion table, leaving room for the communicants to kneel between the table and the pew. The final payment for the erection of the chapel was made on the 20th June, 1734, suggesting that the new building had gone into service by that time.

The exact location of the Flat Creek Chapel has not been determined, but it evidently lay somewhere near Flat Creek, in the western end of the present Amelia County, and hence was cut off with Raleigh Parish in 1735, as a result of the act of 1734, creating the above county and parish. Since the Namozine Chapel was situated south of the Appomattox River and on the upper side of Namozine Creek, it was also in Amelia County and was therefore cut off with Raleigh Parish, of which these two streams formed the lower boundaries.

Although the former clerk of the Namozine Chapel, Thomas Spain, continued reading the service to residents of Bristol Parish at Namozine (i. e., the section opposite the lost chapel and formerly served by it), the need of a church in this part of the parish led to a petition for its replacement. The Bristol vestry therefore ordered, on 20th May, 1738, that a frame church be built north of Hatcher's Run, on the land of Allen Tye, fifty by twenty-two feet in size. The new chapel was to rest on a "rock-stone" foundation fifteen inches high, and to have sash windows with diamond panes, probably leaded. Like other colonial chapels in this section of Virginia, the building was tarred all over, only the doors, windows and cornice being painted. A dilute solution of tar was probably used, to give a dark brown stain of a preservative character. Isham Eppes undertook to build the Hatcher's Run Chapel for about £120 and to complete it by the last of October, 1740.

The new chapel on Hatcher's Run must have been destroyed by fire almost as soon as it was finished, since the vestry, on 27th October, 1740, "ordered that . . . the Church at Hatcher's Run be rebuilt" following this with an order of 2nd December, 1740, for "a Chapple to be built on Hatchers Run at the most convenient place . . . of the same dimensions and manner with that on Hatchers Run lately burnt". This second Hatcher's Run Chapel apparently occupied a new site, north of this stream, in the present Dinwiddie County. It was built by James Clark for £118, just in time to be cut off with the new parish of Bath, in accordance with the act of 1742. The new chapel was received by the Bath Parish vestry on 21st January, 1742/3.

Its existence is still commemorated by the old highway known as the Church Road, which gave its name to a station on the Norfolk and Western Railway. It seems probable that the chapel's site lay near the point at which this ancient road crosses the upper end of Hatcher's Run.

The last colonial church built for Bristol Parish was the Jones' Hole Chapel, the first record of whose erection is found in a vestry order of 23rd October, 1739, "That a Chapple be built for the convenience of the lower parts of this parish, 50 feet by 22 feet", this order being effectuated by a levy of 10,000 pounds of tobacco. The location chosen for the new church is given in an order of 5th February, 1739/40, for "the New Chapel to be built on Thomas Bonners land . . . on the great Branch of Jones' Hole [Creek] convenient to the Spring". Mr. John Ravenscroft⁶¹ agreed, for a price of about £135, to build the chapel, which was to have the same finish and dimensions as the Hatcher's Run Chapel and to be completed by the last of December, 1741.

The order of 5th February, 1740, fixing the location of the Jones' Hole Chapel, was vacated less than a month later and the new building was placed "on Titmashes Land as more convenient than Bonners besides having a good Spring". Even this decision was not final, as the chapel was moved again, on 26th May, 1740, to "the most convenient place to water nearest to 1½ miles distance East from the said Titmass's". Just what the contractor was doing, while the Bristol vestrymen were changing their minds about the chapel's location, is not clear and the uncertainty was not ended until 22nd October, 1740, when it was ordered "That the Southern Chapple be built at the Harrican nearest to the best water". That the building thus mentioned was the Jones' Hole Chapel is evident from duplicate entries in the vestry book, recording payment to the rector, Reverend William Harrison, for the expense of building a house at this chapel, which is described in one of these entries as "the Harricane Church" and in the other as "the Jones Hole Church".

It has been brought out by a recent writer that the word "hurricane" in colonial records had a special significance, distinct from and yet closely related to its common meaning of a violent storm of wind and water, derived through the Spanish from the Carib term "hura-

⁶¹ Presumably the same builder who was mason contractor for the Cypress Church in Surry County, only four years later.

can" for such a storm. Its colonial significance was that of a shelter from high wind and water, and hence, secondarily, a safe place for a large gathering of people or the actual gathering itself. This is evident from the colonial records of at least three Southside Virginia counties, in which such a hurricane (variously spelled "harrican", "harricane", "Harry Cain", etc.) is found on high, level ground in the headwater fork of a creek, often called, by association, the Harricane Creek.⁶²

In this case, the lower course of Jones' Hole Creek is designated Harricane Swamp on older maps, and the chapel itself was appropriately situated on an elevated site at the head of the stream, near an old spring. The chapel site is believed to be indicated by two grave-stones, commemorating the burial in 1818 and 1836, respectively, of Winnyford and Mary Ann Wilkerson, wife and daughter of the Reverend William Wilkerson. These stones stand in the woods at the edge of a field, which appears to have been the chapel's site. This field lies between the two most westerly branches of the headwaters of Jones' Hole Creek, about one and a half miles north of Reams station on the Atlantic Coast Line Railway. The state highway, past the farm on which this site lies, partly follows an older route still remembered by older residents as the Church Road.

The site is just east of the Dinwiddie County line, which did not coincide with the original Bath Parish boundary at this point, since the chapel remained in Bristol Parish after its division in 1742. When the western part of Bath Parish was returned to its parent organization in 1745, still more of the territory served by Jones' Hole Chapel was again included in Bristol Parish.⁶³

Outside of the parish vestry records, the last published reference to the Jones' Hole Chapel seems to have been in connection with its use during the great Methodist revival of 1787, when the old building was so over-crowded that the floor gave way, letting the congregation down several inches, but without lessening their religious enthusiasm.⁶⁴

Almost the final order in the Bristol Parish vestry book, dated 18th April, 1789, requires the provision of "a sufficient Lock & Key for Jones Hole Church". It was evidently prompted by further unauthorized use of the building for such meetings as this Methodist revival, since it orders the giving of "publick Notice that if any Person

⁶² *Virginia Historical Magazine*, L, 137.

⁶³ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, V, 261.

⁶⁴ Bennett, *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*, 245.

or Persons shall here after open the Doors or Windows of said Church, or officiate therein without Leave first obtaind of the Minister & Church Wardens of this Parish, He or They so offending shall be dealt with according to Law”.

Of all the colonial chapels of Bristol Parish, Saponey Chapel alone remains, and that has only a doubtful claim to being considered a colonial church, since the old building collapsed, about 1870, and lay in ruins two years, before it was rebuilt so as to employ much of the timber from the original structure.⁶⁵ The published account of the old chapel's collapse, on which this statement is based, is amply substantiated by Bishop Whittle's report to the Diocesan Convention of 1872, in which he says: “November 10 (1871). Old Sapony Church, built before the revolution, and which had fallen to pieces since my last visit, I found replaced by a new building, not yet entirely finished”.

Saponey Chapel is noted as the church of the Reverend Devereux Jarratt, whose encouragement of the early Methodists, prior to their separation from the Episcopal Church, led to his being called “the father of Methodism in Southeastern Virginia”. He was rector of Bath Parish from 1763 until his death in 1800, and at the restoration of Saponey Church, following its collapse, the remains of the Reverend Mr. Jarratt and his wife were removed from their home burying ground and re-interred under the pulpit of the church, in which a shaft and tablet were set up, to their memory.

In his autobiography, Mr. Jarratt states that he was received as minister of Bath Parish, Dinwiddie County, on the 29th August, 1763. He preached first at Butterwood Church and then at Saponey Church and Hatcher's Run Chapel.⁶⁶ Since the two latter churches were both frame chapels originally built for Bristol Parish, it is evident that Butterwood Church was the first church erected for the new parish. The precedence given to it by Mr. Jarratt, when inaugurating services in his new charge, shows that it was the parish church.

The response to Mr. Jarratt's evangelistic preaching was so widespread that he was finally led to extend it through twenty-nine counties in Virginia and North Carolina. Mr. Jarratt relates that, as a result of this response, “Butterwood Church soon became too small

⁶⁵ *Tyler's Quarterly*, IX, 66.

⁶⁶ Jarratt, *Autobiography and Letters*, 80, 81.

to hold one-half the congregation. One large wing and then another, were added to it, but yet room was wanting."

The location of Butterwood Church is approximately given by Mr. Jarratt in a letter of 17th December, 1796, in which he says: "In December last, I purchased a tract of land in . . . Dinwiddie . . . It lies between the glebe where I now live and Nottoway river, about six or seven miles from this place and within about 2 miles of Nottoway river . . . about seven miles from Sappony—eight miles from Butterwood and fifteen or sixteen miles from Hatcher's Run Church".⁶⁷ The exact situation of the glebe mentioned has not been determined, but, in order to agree with the distances given, Butterwood Church must have stood on the south side of Butterwood Creek, in the western part of the county and parish. Butterwood Creek is the middle one of the three creeks forming the headwaters of Stony Creek, as shown on the map in Plate 15.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 183.



PLATE 19.

Saponey Church.

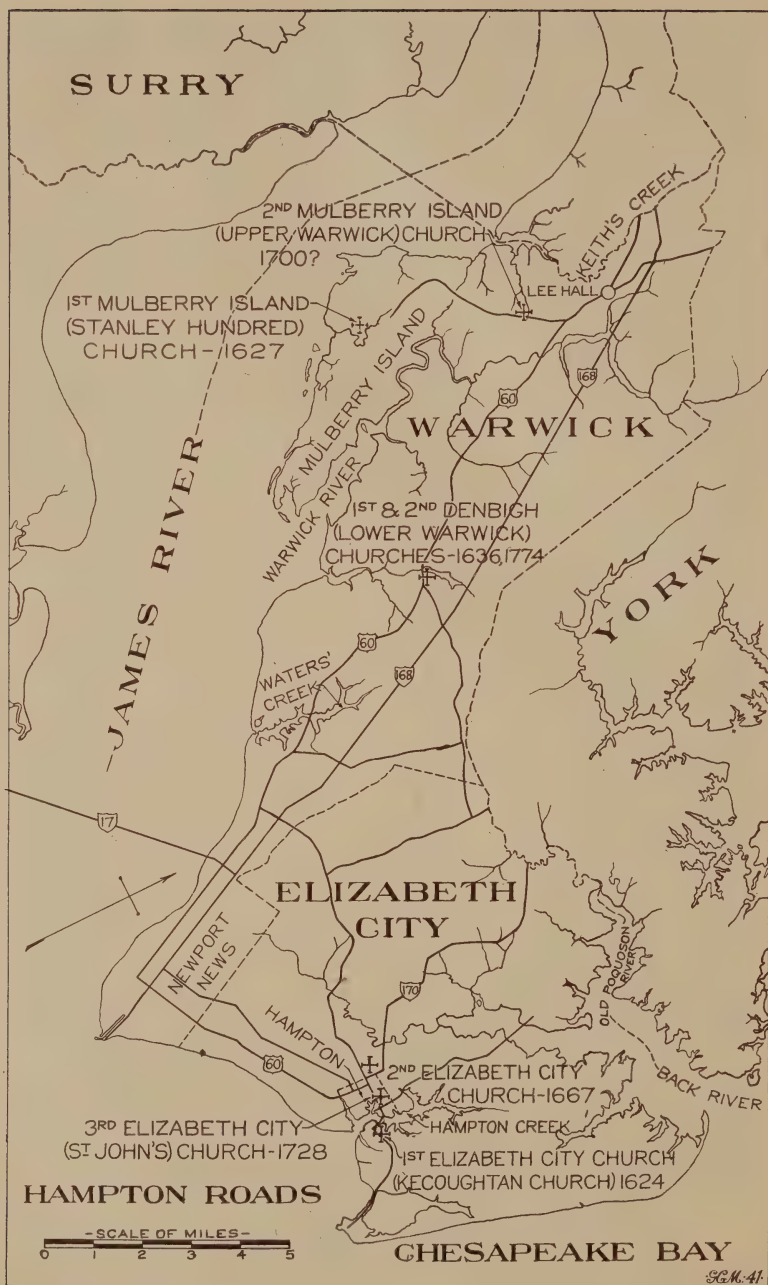


PLATE 20. *Map of Elizabeth City and
Warwick Counties.*

CHAPTER V.

Elizabeth City and Warwick County Churches

THE STORY of the colonial churches of Warwick and Elizabeth City counties in Virginia starts with the opening years of the colony's existence, since both of these counties lay below Jamestown on the historic Virginia peninsula, in the most favorable position for early settlement. With one modernly-formed exception,¹ Warwick and Elizabeth City are today the two smallest counties in the state. Warwick County has the further distinction of being the smallest of the original shires and the only one whose size has never been altered through the formation of other countries from its territory. The colonial records of both counties have largely been destroyed, those of Warwick by pillage during the Civil War, and Elizabeth City's, to a less extent, through the burning of Hampton, in the same period. An eighteenth-century vestry book has been preserved for Elizabeth City's only colonial parish.

The colonial churches of Elizabeth City County begin their long history at an earlier date than those of Warwick or any other county in Virginia, because the first landing of the Jamestown colonists on our soil took place at Cape Henry, within the original bounds of Elizabeth City County, on the 6th of May, 1607, and the cross then set up symbolized the planting of the English Church in America. The actual settlement of this county was second only to that of Jamestown and took place in 1610, when some of the colonists were sent to Kecoughtan, already known as a place abounding in food supplies, to relieve the shortage of provisions at Jamestown.

Organization of the colony into four "cities" or boroughs, for administrative purposes, was ordered by the Virginia Company of London in 1618, resulting in the formation of the borough of Kecoughtan, named for the aboriginal occupants of this territory, the Kecoughtan Indians.² These friendly savages, who had entertained Captain John Smith at their village, on the eastern bank of the stream known today as Hampton Creek, were unjustly driven out on the 19th July, 1610, by

¹ Alexandria county, originally a part of Fairfax county, ceded to the District of Columbia at its formation in 1789, and retroceded to Virginia in 1847 (Robinson, *Virginia Counties*, 74).

² Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London*, III, 100.

Sir Thomas Gates, in revenge for the murder of a colonist, Humphrey Blunt, by the hostile Nansemond Indians.³ As the result of a petition to the first General Assembly in 1619 for a change in its "savage" name,⁴ the borough of Kecoughtan became known as Elizabeth City Corporation, in honor of the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of King James I.⁵ It extended east from James City Corporation to the Atlantic Ocean.

Through the reorganization of the Virginia colony into eight shires or counties in 1634, Elizabeth City County was formed out of the entire eastern portion of the corporation of that name, being bounded on the west by the original counties of Warwick River (later Warwick) and Warrosquyoake (later Isle of Wight). Two years later, all of Elizabeth City County, east of Hampton Roads, seems to have been cut off as the county of New Norfolk and in 1637, this area was further subdivided into Lower Norfolk and Upper Norfolk Counties. The present counties of Norfolk and Princess Anne were formed from Lower Norfolk in 1691,⁶ and Upper Norfolk became the present Nansemond County in 1646.⁷

The pioneer settlement of 1610 at Kecoughtan constituted a typical plantation parish which formed the nucleus of the later parish of Elizabeth City. Early land patents reveal that the settlement's original savage name of Kecoughtan persisted as the title of the parish, long after the date of its official abandonment by order of the Virginia Company. One of these patents grants to "John Taylor of Newport News, Yeoman and Ancient Planter, 50 acres, being one half of his first devident in the Parish of Kiccoughtan in the Corporation of Elizabeth City" and is dated the 20th September, 1624.⁸

As in other such cases, the colonists' efforts to write the Indian name Kecoughtan in an English form resulted in a variety of spellings, as may be observed in the records quoted herein. The form adopted in this article, Kecoughtan, while by no means the simplest spelling found, is the accepted modern version of the name, which has appropriately been applied to the post office at the United States Veterans' Home near the site of the original Indian village of Kecoughtan.

³ *Force's Tracts*, III, No. 1.

⁴ Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London*, III, 160.

⁵ *Ibid.*, III, 275.

⁶ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, III, 95.

⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 321.

⁸ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 5.

That the formation of the four great corporations in 1618 carried with it, in each case, the creation of a parish coterminous with the corporation is evident from an order of the colonial council, dated 10th October, 1624. This order states that "The Councell at this Courte assembled do conceive that Accordinge to the Companies Charter bearing date the 4th of Maye 1620 they have researved to themselves the right of patronage of the minister and parishes of the four Ancyent Buroughs whereof Elizabeth Cytie is one. And therefor that the parishioners of the saide Corporacon are not of themselves to elect A minister but that the Choyse of the minister shall remane to the Company." The same order then rehearses that Mr. George Keith and Mr. Thomas White had served successively as "minister of the Corporacon of Elizabeth Cytie", proving that the council regarded the borough and parish as coterminous up to that date, or at least, that the borough constituted one parish, coterminous with the settled territory of the borough.

A distinct tendency toward division of the original Elizabeth City Parish is revealed in this order, which records the previous appointment of Mr. Jonas Stogden (Stockton) as "minister of Pte of the said Corporation (of Elizabeth City) in regard the said parish is much enlarged" and requires the inhabitants from Hampton River to Captain Tucker's Creek to pay tithes toward his support. The existence of public sentiment in favor of the division of this and other early parishes in the colony is shown in the final provision of this order "that all other Controversies Concerninge the devidinge of the parishes shall stand as now it doth until it be decided by A generall Assemble or by some other lawfull heeringe."⁹

The parish of Elizabeth City did not remain coterminous with the corporation during the ensuing decade, from 1624 to 1634, but its territory above Newport News, on the north side of the James River, underwent a gradual development into several distinct parishes, independently of the growth of Elizabeth City. This explains the final establishment of this territory, at the end of this decade, as a separate county, first known as Warwick River and later as Warwick.

The possibility that the remainder of the original parish of Elizabeth City Corporation, east of Newport News, became divided into two parishes, one on each side of Hampton Roads, is suggested by the minutes of a General Court held on 8th April, 1629, at which "The

⁹ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 22.

Churchwardens of the Pishe (Parish) of the lower Ptes (Parts) of Elizabeth Citty did present William Capps and John Sipse (Sibsey) for not frequenting of the Parish Church."¹⁰

The journal of the House of Burgesses for 1632 reinforces this suggestion by recording the attendance of representatives from "The Upper Parish of Elizabeth City" and "The Lower Parish of Elizabeth City."¹¹ In such records, the term "lower" was always applied to the section first settled, which in this case, lay on the north side of Hampton Roads. This is confirmed by the journal just quoted, since the lower parish was represented by Adam Thorowgood, who was still living within the present boundaries of Elizabeth City County in 1632 and did not move across the Roads to Lynnhaven until two years later, while the upper parish's representatives were Thomas Willoughby, John Sibsey and Henry Seawell. Both Willoughby and Sibsey had settled on the south side of the Roads, as early as 1620,¹² while no record has been found of Seawell except at the point still called by his name on the southern shore of the same body of water.

On the other hand, it appears that John Sibsey's absence from the parish church at Elizabeth City in 1629 must have been due to his previous removal to the opposite shore of Hampton Roads, where this supposititious Lower Parish would have had no jurisdiction. Most important of all, there is no evidence of any parish church on the south side of Hampton Roads, to represent the supposed Upper Parish, prior to the formation of Lower Norfolk County in 1637. It therefore seems probable that the wording of these records represents, in the first case, an inverted and in the second case, an elliptical form of the expression "lower (or upper) parts of the parish of Elizabeth City" and that, except for parishes developed with the present bounds of Warwick County, the original parish of Elizabeth City Corporation remained undivided until after the formation of counties in 1634.

Further weight is given to this hypothesis by the list of burgesses at the General Assembly of 1633, in which the terms "Lower Partes" and "Upper Partes" of Elizabeth City are used as if interchangeable with the previous "Lower Parish" and "Upper Parish."¹³ The formation of new counties from Elizabeth City County's original area carried with it the erection of coterminous parishes, leaving the present parish oc-

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 194.

¹¹ McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses, 1619-60*, xii.

¹² *Lower Norfolk County Deeds, 1656-68*, D, 348.

¹³ McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses, 1619-60*, xiii.

cupying the county's entire remaining area, down to the present day.

It is traditional that the Reverend William Mease came to Virginia as minister with Lord de la Warr in 1610 and officiated at that early date for the Kecoughtan settlement, where he is listed as rector in 1616, in John Rolfe's *Relation of the State of Virginia*.¹⁴ Some doubt is cast on this tradition by Mease's own statement, in the London Company's records for 1623, that he had then lived only ten years in the colony,¹⁵ but it appears that Lord de la Warr brought a minister with him and this unnamed divine may well have served at Kecoughtan until Mease's arrival.

In view of the fact that, in 1609, the Company had ordered a church to be constructed at each plantation, it seems possible that some sort of rude church building was erected at Kecoughtan, as at Jamestown, in the earliest years of the settlement. However, since Kecoughtan was still only an outpost in 1616, with no more than twenty male inhabitants, according to Rolfe, it seems equally probable that the first services were held in a store house or private dwelling.

The existing records being completely silent on this point, we are forced to conclude that a further order of the General Court of 10th October, 1624, already mentioned, must refer to the construction of the first church built at Elizabeth City. This order reads, in part: "And Concerning the payinge of workmen's wages for building the Church, it is ordered that Capt. Tucker shall call the Executors of William Gauntlett and Ed. Waters beinge then Churchwardens to bring in their Accomptes w^{ch} the[y] have Collected . . . towards the buildinge of the Church w^{ch} is presently to be disposed of towards the payment of woorkmen's wages."¹⁶ This first church may be assumed to have been built in response to an act of assembly of March, 1623/4, calling for a house or room to be set apart for divine worship at every plantation, and its construction was in charge of Captain William Tucker, as commander of the Elizabeth City settlement.¹⁷

A bequest to this first Elizabeth City church was made in the historic will of Benjamin Syms, establishing the first free school in America, on the shores of the upper part of Back River's northwest branch, once known as Old Poquoson River. This will, dated 10th February, 1634/5, leaves 500 pounds of tobacco "to the Church of the Old

¹⁴ *Virginia Historical Register*, I, 110.

¹⁵ Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London*, II, 385.

¹⁶ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 22.

¹⁷ Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London*, III, 664.

Poquoson" and 200 pounds to its minister at the time the will was proved. Since the territory between Back River and Hampton Roads was then known as "the Old Poquoson" in contradistinction to "the New Poquoson," which lay between Back River and the present Poquoson River, the church in question was clearly the first Elizabeth City Parish Church. The same will limits the benefits of the free school bequest to the poor children of "the adjoining Parrishes of Elizb. City and Poquoson (viz.) from Mary's Mount downward to the Poquoson River," thus affording the earliest record of the existence of New Poquoson Parish in York County.¹⁸

Further reference to the first church is found in a patent dated November, 1637, granting to Robert Partin 40 acres of land in Elizabeth City County, bounded "S. on the fort feild . . . and north to the Church."¹⁹ The Fort Field was the site of Forts Henry and Charles, built by Sir Thomas Dale in 1610, and was situated on the Strawberry Banks, named from the abundance of wild strawberries found when the colonists first landed here in 1607, on the eastern side of the mouth of Hampton Creek. An earlier patent to Elizabeth Dunthorne, dated 20th September, 1624, refers to "Church Creek" as dividing the granted land from "the Gleab land," on which the church is known to have stood.²⁰

Upon Governor Harvey's return to Virginia, in January, 1636/7, he landed at Old Point Comfort and proceeded to the reading of his commission and instructions "at the church of Elizabeth Cittie," where, after taking the oaths of allegiance of his new council, he published the royal proclamation of amnesty to those who had taken part in his expulsion.²¹

The site of this first Elizabeth City church was discovered on the old glebe land in 1910, through the use of a sounding rod, under the direction of Mr. Jacob Heffelfinger. Upon excavation, the foundation proved to be of cobblestone, with a few bricks, and is clearly that of a wooden building, probably of framed timber, like the contemporary Argall church at Jamestown. The outside dimensions of the foundation, as given by Mr. Heffelfinger, are fifty-three feet six inches long by twenty-three feet wide, and inside it were found fragments of the

¹⁸ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XX, 12, 23.

¹⁹ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 6.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 6.

²¹ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, X, 265.

church floor, made of brick tiles, 8 inches square by 1½ inches thick.²²

The foundation lies near the center of an artificial mound, raised two or three feet above the surrounding land and about one hundred feet square, containing nearly a quarter of an acre. Within the foundation are three fragmentary old tombstones, one with part of an inscription apparently dated in the seventeenth century, the figures 16 and the tail of a third figure, 5 or 9, being visible. Near the southwest corner of the mound is a fresh spring, filled with water-cress, which is the source of a small tributary of the nearby Hampton Creek. The foundation has been enclosed with an iron fence, and the site is shaded by a grove of hackberry trees. A handsome granite cross, erected by the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, fittingly commemorates the existence of this historic pioneer church, and annual services are held at the spot, which has been deeded to the parish by the owners of the land. The churchyard lies at the east end of College Place.

The date at which this early church was replaced by a new building is approximately given by two wills, both dated in 1667. In the first of these wills, written on 21st December in that year, Nicholas Baker directs his body "to be decently buried in the new church of Kighotan"; in the second, Robert Brough requests that he may be buried "in the old church of Kichotan."²³ These wills prove that the first church at Elizabeth City, although still used for burials in 1667, had then been succeeded by a new parish church on a different site. Both records are remarkable for the persistence of the ancient Indian name of the parish, as applied to its church, almost half a century after its official replacement by the name Elizabeth City.

Evidence that the first church of this parish, although abandoned for purposes of worship before 1667, was still standing, more than thirty years later, is found in a court order of 1698, levying 400 lbs. of tobacco to be paid "To Walter Bayley for pulling down the old Church & setting up benches in the Court House."²⁴ From the wording of this order, it is apparent that the old church's pews were salvaged from the general demolition of the building and used to seat attendants at the monthly courts.

These courts were held in the new town of Hampton, founded in response to legislation of 1680 and 1691 for the establishment of ports,

²² Heffelfinger, *Kecoughtan, Old and New*, 16.

²³ McCabe in *Church Review*, VI, 18.

²⁴ *Elizabeth City County Deeds and Wills*, 1689-99, 160.

and incorporated as a town in 1705. This town was described in 1716 as having one hundred inhabitants, but no church. The writer manifestly referred only to the existing limits of the town, since there is ample evidence that the "new church" of 1667 was then in service, on a site so close to the town's borders that it must have been attended by the townspeople.

Definite proof that a church of Elizabeth City Parish was in service just prior to the incorporation of Hampton town is found in the journal of the Reverend George Keith, believed to have been a grandson of the minister of the same name, who had officiated at Elizabeth City prior to 1624. In this journal Mr. Keith, who had been a Quaker, but was then a minister of the Established Church, records that on Sunday, the 2nd of May, 1703, he "preached at Kicketan Church by James River." The church thus mentioned was evidently the second Elizabeth City Parish Church of 1667, and Mr. Keith's use of the ancient name of Kecoughtan is made even more remarkable by his application of it to the thriving town of Hampton, in a later passage.

The same diary suggests the existence of a chapel-of-ease in Elizabeth City Parish, by the entry: "May 9, Sunday. (1703). I preached at a Chappel in Elizabeth [City] County."²⁵ Since no other record of the existence of such a chapel has yet been found, it seems probable that this entry refers to Charles Parish Church, which stood just over the Elizabeth City line, in York County.

The second church of Elizabeth City Parish may be assumed to have been built not long before 1667, in response to an act of assembly passed in March, 1661/2, requiring "that there be a church decently built in each parish of this country."²⁶ The location of this church was undoubtedly influenced by the trend of settlement to the westward of Hampton Creek, and it was erected one and one-half miles from the first church, on the opposite side of the stream. Its site was discovered, just prior to the Civil War, through the efforts of the Rev. John C. McCabe, then rector of the parish, and lies north of the present Queen Street on the east side of State Route 1706, near the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway tracks.

The brick foundation of this second Elizabeth City Church has recently been completely excavated, and shows it to have been a frame building about fifty by twenty-seven feet, outside, only slightly larger

²⁵ *Collections of Protestant Episcopal Historical Society* (1851), 37.

²⁶ Henning, *Statutes at Large*, II, 44.

than its predecessor, the first church. The foundation has its outer surface laid in Flemish bond, only a few of the bricks being glazed, and is one and a half brick lengths or about fourteen inches thick and rests on a two-brick footing, about nineteen inches wide. Since the church stood on land included in the later Pembroke Farm, it has become known in modern times as the Pembroke Church, but no evidence of the colonial use of this name has been found. Proof that the old church burned down, after being abandoned, was discovered during the excavation of its foundation, in the form of charred wood and melted window glass.

The churchyard is still marked by four of the oldest and most interesting tombstones in the state, whose dates range from 1697 to 1719, suggesting a strong probability of the active use of this old church building during the period when Hampton is supposed by some to have been without a church. A further suggestion that the church was in service until an even later date is found in a court record of 19th November, 1724, in which the Grand Jury presented "the Church Wardens of this Parish and County for not keeping the Churchyard in good repair."²⁷ Nine acres of land, surrounding and including the church site, have been acquired by the parish as a reserve burial ground, and the foundation and tombs have been cemented and fenced in.

Since this church was built before the town of Hampton came into existence, the future location of that thriving colonial seaport had no bearing upon the choice of a site for the new building, which, many years later, came to be regarded by the townspeople as inconveniently far out into the country. This feeling came to a head when the new church had become an old one, whose increasing age made its replacement urgently necessary.

The resulting controversy over the location of its successor is recorded in the following order of council, dated 27th October, 1727: "Whereas Sundry Inhabitants and the Majority of the Vestry of Elizabeth City Parish have represented to the Governour that the Church of the said Parish is so ruinous that it is Dangerous for them to Repair thither for the Performing Divine Service and that Great Differences have arisen between the Inhabitants of the said Parish concerning the place where a new Church should be built in the said Parish and . . . an Order was made by the last House of Burgesses

²⁷ *Elizabeth City County Orders, 1723-29, 61.*

that the present Vestry should not proceed to the building of a New Church before the next Session of Assembly, which is complained of as a great grievance to the Petitioners . . . It is the Opinion of the Board that the New Church should be built in the town of Hampton as the most convenient place in the said Parrish and that the Vestry be at liberty to proceed to the building of the same."²⁸ This record sets at rest any doubt as to the survival of the second church until the above date.

In accordance with the above order of council, a new building was erected in Hampton town, as the third church of the parish, and the first steps toward its construction are recorded in a county court order of 17th January, 1727/8, in which "Mr. Jacob Walker and Mr. John Lowry are appointed to Lay of and Vallue an Acre and half of Ground at the upper end of Queens Street, joyning upon Mr. Boswell's Lott for the Building the Church thereon . . . It is agreed by the Minister, Churchwardens and Court to furnish Mr. Henry Cary with wood, at the rate of Six Pence per load, to burn bricks for the Church from the School land."²⁹ The "School land" mentioned was that of the historic Syms-Eaton Free School, whose affairs were administered by the minister and churchwardens of the parish, acting as trustees, jointly with the county commissioners. The pit from which clay was dug to make bricks for the church walls is said to have been visible, back of the original churchyard, until a half century ago. There is no record of the date of completion of this church, but it is believed to have been placed in service in 1728.

The third Elizabeth City Parish Church of 1728 is the building now known as St. John's Church, Hampton, which stands in the northwest corner of Queen and Court Streets. It is a brick structure in the form of a Latin cross, with chancel and transept wings of exactly the same length and the nave nearly twice as long. The outside dimensions of the cross are seventy-five feet two inches, east to west, by sixty feet eight inches, north to south. The body of the church and the transept are both of the same width, thirty feet four inches, outside, and the three wings of the cross each project fifteen feet two inches, while the nave is twenty-nine feet eight inches in length. The walls are laid in Flemish bond, with glazed headers, above the water table, with the foundation in English bond. The thickness of the walls is two feet, or 2½ brick lengths.

²⁸ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XXXII, 246.

²⁹ *Elizabeth City County Orders, 1723-29*, 226.

As in most cruciform colonial churches, there is a main entrance at the west end of the nave and a secondary entrance at each end of the transept. Early pictures of the church make it clear that the north and south doorways had classic pediments, angular-topped, supported by raised pilasters, all of rubbed brick. There is evidence in the brickwork of the west end wall that the original west entrance was also of classic design, with a round-topped pediment and pilasters framing the gauged brick trim of the circular-headed doorway, making it larger and more elaborate than the other two entrances, as in other colonial churches of the period. This west doorway trim was removed, at the building of the tower, and all three doorways have now been enclosed with modern brick vestibules.

The church as built had two windows in each side of the nave and in the east end of the chancel, and one window in each side of the chancel and transept wings. There was also a circular window, four feet in diameter, in each of the north, east and south gables, and these windows still remain. The west gallery was lighted by two windows, of unknown size and shape, which were later closed up when a steeple was built. The present west end windows are modern additions.

Still to be seen in the north side of the nave is the unique feature of a much smaller window than the rest, placed hardly more than a foot east of the easternmost window in this wall. This window was located just west of the high colonial pulpit, which stood at the north-west re-entrant angle of the cross-shaped building. It is manifest that the purpose of this window was to illuminate the pulpit, for the minister's benefit while reading his sermon, since the eastern side of the window embrasure was originally slanted so as to throw the light in that direction. There is good precedent for the placement of a small, high window back of the pulpit of a colonial church, in the specifications for a Sussex county chapel, the last St. Andrew's Church of Albemarle parish.³⁰

The only surviving vestry book of Elizabeth City parish opens in 1751. Bishop Meade states that until this time (and on one list after this date), the parish was called Hampton Parish, but that from the beginning of the vestry book, it was changed to Elizabeth City Parish. The list mentioned by the bishop is apparently one of two lists of Virginia ministers, published in 1754 and 1755, both of which give the parish's name as Hampton.³¹

³⁰ See page 48.

³¹ Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 411, 429.

Since the vestry book, which is contemporary with these lists, uses the name Elizabeth City Parish throughout and no earlier record has been found to authenticate the name Hampton Parish, the evidence of these lists cannot be accepted as valid, especially as other lists of this sort contain many erroneous parish names.

Having gone into service in 1728, almost a quarter century earlier, the third Elizabeth City Parish Church was already old enough to require repair, at the opening of the vestry book in 1751. The earliest entries in this ancient record, therefore, deal with the painting and whitewashing of the church building, the renewal of its floor framing and the mending of windows and gallery stairs. Few details of the original interior arrangement are given in the vestry book's opening pages, but mention is made of the west gallery, regularly provided in a colonial church at its erection, and of an altar piece, doubtless of conventional type, with tablets bearing the Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer, and Creed.

The churchyard must have been enclosed with a wooden fence, for which a new gate with cedar posts and sill was provided in 1751, and there were "horse-racks" for hitching saddle horses and teams, over one of which racks a "cover" was ordered built in 1765, probably due to its unshaded position. A brick churchyard wall was under way in 1759, but the contractors were so dilatory that the churchwardens were ordered to bring suit for breach of contract, if it were not finished by the 15th September in that year. All efforts to hurry the builders were of no avail, and the wall was actually not completed until January, 1762. Even then, the finished product was condemned as "insufficient" and the churchwardens were again directed to bring suit, with what result is not told. The wall's brickwork must have been made satisfactory to the vestry by February, 1763, when two new churchyard gates were made and installed.

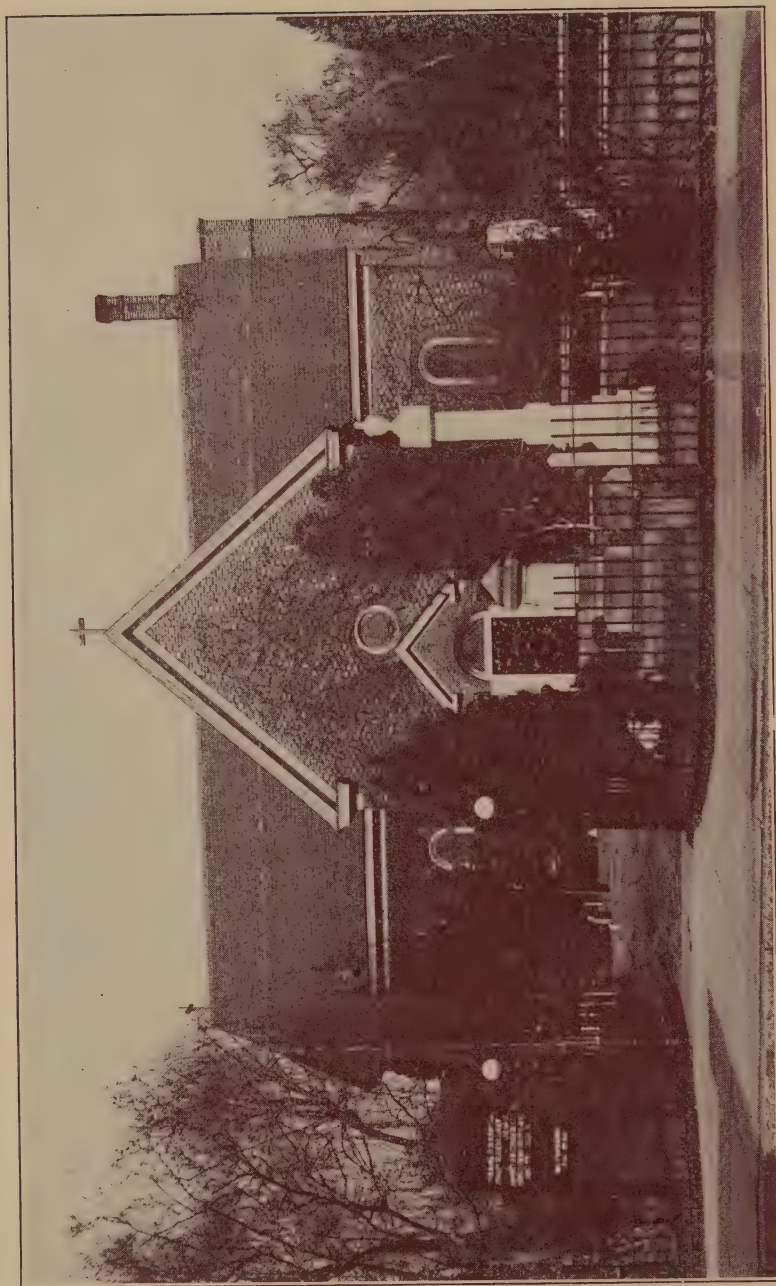
A gallery was built in the north transept wing, at some time before 1763, by Mr. Alexander McKenzie, who probably paid for the privilege. There is said to have been a gallery in the south wing also, but it is not mentioned in the vestry book.

The most important improvement of the church building, subsequent to its completion, was the erection of a brick steeple, topped by a wooden belfry. This project was undertaken on the 6th February, 1761, in compliance with terms of the will of Mr. Alexander Kennedy, who bequeathed to the parish £40, to purchase a bell for the church, provided that the parish should build a belfry for it,



PLATE 21

Site of first Elizabeth City Church.



St. John's Church, Hampton, from Queen Street.

within one year after his death. In accordance with colonial custom, this steeple was built at the west end of the church, the two existing gallery windows being closed up and two new ones ordered cut in the end wall, clear of the tower. These new windows do not appear to have been cut, since there was no room for them outside the tower.

The size of the tower was not specified, but it must have been about eighteen feet square, judging from the dimensions later specified for its wooden belfry. Its thickness was to be $3\frac{1}{2}$ bricks below the water table, $2\frac{1}{2}$ bricks above it, to the ceiling of the church, and 2 bricks the rest of the way. The tower was ordered to be joined to the west end wall of the church, but was evidently built as a separate structure, like the Bruton Church steeple at Williamsburg, since the end wall's brickwork shows no trace of a joint.

Specifications for the belfry called for it to be fourteen feet square and built of the best white oak timber throughout, painted white up to the eaves, with a lead-colored roof. It was originally of open design, but in 1766, it was ordered "to be closed up with Cyphered Plank and that Window Shutters be made and put to the Steeple Windows," probably those in the belfry's sides, as a Civil War sketch of the old church shows no windows (except in the front wall) in the tower below the belfry.

The brick tower was received by the vestry on the 15th June, 1762, and the wooden portion of the steeple was ready for painting by the end of the following month. As the result of difficulty in securing payment of Mr. Kennedy's legacy from his executor, the bell was not purchased and hung until the 26th November, 1766. It is traditional that the tower was ornamented with the British royal coat-of-arms, and that this was hurled to the ground when the steeple was struck by lightning during the Revolutionary War, an event hailed as a good omen by the local patriots.

The final improvement of the church during the colonial era was the purchase of church ornaments, for which the churchwardens were directed to "send home" to England, on 29th December, 1768. These ornaments consisted of a pulpit cloth, communion table cloth and cushions, all of crimson velvet with a silk fringe. In payment for them, four hogsheads of tobacco were shipped to England, insured for £30 Sterling, and the goods were insured for a like amount on the return trip, the entire cost of shipment being assumed by a public-spirited vestryman, Colonel Wilson Miles Cary.

With the remission of all tithes for religious purposes by act of assembly effective 1st January, 1777,³² the old church was deprived of its principal financial support, but the vestry continued legally to levy tithes for the care of the parish poor. The private gallery built by Mr. Alexander McKenzie, in the north transept wing of the church, had been taken over by the vestry in 1763, for the use of the parish, following the owner's departure from the colony in that year, but only for the duration of his absence. He does not seem to have returned, for this same gallery was permanently taken over by the parish in 1780, divided into four pews, and sold to members of the congregation for £3400, in order to raise money during the financial emergency. The amount realized illustrates the depreciation of the Continental currency at that date, since the same sum in English pounds Sterling would have paid for the entire church, three times over. Contrary to the popular belief, the church escaped injury during the Revolution, except for slight damage from fire during bombardment of the town by the British in 1775.³³

Following the disestablishment of the Episcopal Church in 1785, the vestry's duties in connection with the care of the poor and the processioning of land were assumed by the overseers of the poor, on the 31st July, 1786. For the next two decades, the ministers of Elizabeth City Parish seem to have carried on, alone, without the financial aid of a duly constituted vestry, and supporting themselves, probably, by farming the glebe lands and teaching school. This seems evident from the complete lapse in the vestry record during this period, its place in the old vestry book being taken by the minutes of the overseers of the poor.

The vestry record was resumed in 1806 with the election of a new minister for the parish, and the lack of adequate monetary support for the church at this period is well illustrated by an entry recording that the only repair undertaken, that of the churchyard wall and gate, was done at the joint expense of the vestrymen. Due to the lack of upkeep, the woodwork of the steeple became so rotten, at this time, that the bell had to be taken down and set up on the ground, in the angle between tower and church.

This brief resurgence of parish activity was brought to a close by the War of 1812, during which the church building was desecrated by use as a barracks for British troops, who turned the churchyard

³² Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IX, 164.

³³ Tyler, *History of Hampton*, 41.

into a slaughter pen for livestock. The old bell was taken from its temporary resting-place near the base of the tower and removed to the guard house of the American encampment at Little England plantation, where the tongue having soon fallen out, the hours were struck with an axe until the bell cracked.³⁴

After the war, Hampton went through the same period of religious apathy that was general throughout the state, and the old church was allowed to go to ruin, while the churchyard was used as a public pasture. A dozen years of such neglect reduced the structure to "four walls and a leaky roof," without doors, windows, floors or other interior woodwork, while the decayed timbers of the belfry on the steeple fell down and were carried off with the rest.

A general revival of religion in Virginia took place under Bishop Moore about the year 1824. The old church's restoration was inspired soon afterward, by Mrs. Jane Barron Hope, eldest daughter of Commodore Barron, with the remark: "If I were a man, I would have these walls built up."³⁵ Her challenge was taken up by the men of the congregation, led by Richard B. Servant and Dr. William Hope, and a subscription was started by the vestry on the 28th April, 1826, stating that "Whereas from a variety of circumstances the Episcopal Church in the Town of Hampton is in a state of dilapidation and will ere long moulder into ruins unless some friendly hand be extended to its relief, . . . in the Opinion of the Vestry the only method that can be pursued to accomplish the laudable design of restoring it to the order in which our forefathers bequeathed it to their children, is to resort to subscription."

Later in the same year, a general meeting of "the citizens of Elizabeth City County (friendly to the Protestant Episcopal Church)" was held at the Court House in Hampton to consider the repairing of the church, and a full vestry of twelve was elected. At their first meeting in September, 1826, the vestry elected churchwardens and directed them to write to Bishop Moore for his aid and patronage, and ordered the old vestry book to be rebound and new pages added.

In the following year, the Reverend Mark L. Chevers was chosen minister of the parish, and the old church was first named St. John's Church, by official action of the vestry. A building committee for the church's restoration was appointed and in 1828, by means of additional subscriptions, they completed the repairs of the ruined building.

³⁴ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 236.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 237.

These repairs were truly extensive and included the renewal of the roof, including girders, joists, rafters and wallplates, where necessary, and new shingling entire; the installation of new doors, windows, floors and plastered ceiling, beside new furniture and pews, the latter being sold to the highest bidder to help meet the expense. The church was consecrated by Bishop Moore, under its new name, on the 6th March, 1830.

Repeated efforts were made to restore the wooden belfry on top of the old brick church tower, but they were not successful until fifteen years after the church had been replaced in service. The old bell was sent to New York to be recast, in 1828, and was hung in the restored belfry on St. John's Day, 27th December, 1843. Four months later, the belfry was struck by lightning and badly damaged, but was again repaired.

In the restoration of the church's interior, old-style box pews, with doors, were retained. The aisles were paved, as originally, with red brick tiles, 8 inches square and 1½ inches thick, laid directly on the ground, while the pews and chancel had raised wooden floors. An organ was later installed in the old west gallery, the precentor or choir-leader having previously used a flute. About 1843, the chancel was cut off by a partition, to form a vestry room in the east end of the church, thus limiting the space for services to the T-shaped room formed by the nave and transept. Against the middle of this partition was placed the lofty pulpit, reached by a stair from a door to the vestry room. In front of the pulpit stood the communion table, flanked by the usual lectern, all being enclosed by the communion rail.³⁶ This arrangement had been popularized by Bishop John Henry Hobart (1775-1830) of the New York diocese, at about this period. It was completely at variance with colonial usage, which never placed the pulpit within the chancel.

After three decades of active use, the old parish church of Elizabeth City was again reduced to ruins, when it was burned, with the town, on the night of August 7, 1861, as a military measure carried out by the Confederate forces under General Magruder. Upon the rebuilding of Hampton, following the close of the war in 1865, services were held irregularly in the Odd Fellows' Hall on Court Street, until the restoration of the church building to use on the 13th April, 1870.

The original walls survived the fire, and stand almost unchanged, except that the top of the west gable was carried down by the falling

³⁶ Heffelfinger, *Kecoughtan, Old and New*, 22.

of the brick tower after the conflagration, and had to be rebuilt, while the east end wall has been thickened one foot, by the addition of false work to hide the chimney built for the church's heating plant.

At the time of the church's restoration to service in 1870, a brick vestibule was built outside the north transept doorway, and the south and west doorways were remodelled in keeping with the contemporary architectural style of the other repairs, but with complete disregard of the original colonial design. A small brick robing-room was built just east of this north vestibule, and was later extended some distance beyond the east end of the building. At some later date, similar brick vestibules were erected at the south and west entrances to the church.

A further change was made when the existing tower was built in 1901, in the northeast angle of the church, to provide a vestry room and other facilities. A new organ was installed at this time, requiring the enlargement into arched openings of the windows in the north wall of the chancel and the east wall of the north transept wing. The church has been further embellished in its later years, by the addition of a slate roof, beamed ceiling, stained glass windows, memorial tablets, and new chancel furniture.

The old Kennedy bell, recast in 1828, was melted by the fire of 1861 and thus passed out of existence. A new bell was purchased about half a century ago, which was cracked beyond repair on Armistice Day, 1918, when it was struck with a hammer to make it ring louder, during the celebration. It has since been replaced by a new bell, which, like its predecessor, bears the appropriate inscription: "O come let us worship."

The old church shares with the city of Hampton the glory of three historic priorities claimed for both: First, the town is the oldest continuous settlement of English origin in America; second, the parish is the oldest Protestant parish in continuous existence in America; and third, it possesses a set of communion silver that has been in longer use than any English communion service in the United States.

This ancient communion set consists of a silver-gilt cup inscribed: "The Communion Cupp for S^{nt} Mary's Church in Smith's Hundred in Virginia," and two silver patens, one of which is inscribed: "If any man eate of this Bread he shall live for ever John VIth," all three pieces bearing the London date letter for 1618/19.³⁷ This old silver was given in 1619 by an unknown person to the church at Smith's

³⁷ Jones, *Old Silver of American Churches*, 204.

Hundred, founded by the bequest of £200 in the will of Mrs. Mary Robinson of London, at her death in 1618.³⁸ This church stood at the early settlement of Smith's Hundred, on Dancing Point,³⁹ between the Chickahominy and James Rivers, in what is now Charles City County. The settlement was so badly damaged by the Indian massacre of 1622 that it was abandoned and the surviving colonists transferred to a new site, while the silver was given to Sir George Yeardley, commander of the hundred, and later governor of the colony, for safe-keeping. After his death in 1627, his widow delivered the vessels to the general court at Jamestown,⁴⁰ and since Smith's Hundred had been renamed Southampton Hundred in 1620, in honor of the Earl of Southampton, it is supposed that the court thought it fitting to give the silver to the new church of Elizabeth City on Hampton Creek, then called Southampton River, after the same nobleman.

The only English church silver in the United States that is older than these St. John's Church vessels consists of a chalice and paten made in London in 1611, owned by St. Peter's Church at Perth Amboy, New Jersey. This church was not founded until 1698-99, and its communion silver was imported at that time, eighty years after the Hampton plate came to America.⁴¹

The existing county of Warwick was once a part of the Corporation of Elizabeth City, one of the four great boroughs into which the colony was divided for administrative purposes in 1618. Under the name of Warwick River County, it became one of the eight original shires in 1634, when the colony was first organized on this basis. The present name was adopted by act of assembly dated March, 1642/3, and the same assembly also set the county's boundaries.⁴²

Warwick County's ancient colonial churches had their origin in some of the first plantation parishes of the infant colony, several of these having been established only a score of years after the landing at Jamestown. As early as 1627, Stanley Hundred, a plantation granted to Sir George Yeardley on Mulberry Island in 1621, was functioning as a plantation parish, with its own church, minister and churchwardens. Another early parish was Denbigh, whose church and minister are recorded in 1636-7, and which developed from a plantation of the same name patented before 1622.

³⁸ Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London*, III, 117.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, III, 246.

⁴⁰ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 167.

⁴¹ Bryan in *The Churchman* (June 23, 1900), 773.

⁴² Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 249, 250.

In the year 1628, the new plantations, from Marie's Mount, just north of Newport News, to Waters' Creek, were temporarily united into one parish.⁴³ This parish was formally erected by act of assembly in March, 1642/3, and soon took the name of Nutmeg Quarter, an early plantation within its borders. In 1656, it was combined with Denbigh Parish, which was thus extended to the lower end of the county.

By 1634, Stanley Hundred had developed into Mulberry Island Parish, which, together with Denbigh Parish, composed Warwick County after 1656. These two parishes were combined, about 1725, to form the new parish of Warwick, which was coterminous with the county and remains so, to this day.

The earliest record of a church in what is now Warwick County is found in a land grant of 8th September, 1627, to Robert Poole for 300 acres, "on southerly side of Warwick River, easterly on land of Lieut. Gilbert Peppett, westerly towards the Church there erected and built; northerly on sd. river and southerly to the maine river between Colson's Island & Cedar Island."⁴⁴ This land can be identified as on Mulberry Island, and the building mentioned in the patent was evidently the first church of Stanley Hundred Parish. That this parish was then supplied with a minister, backed by a well-developed parish organization, is apparent from the proceedings of a court held at James City on the 16th November, 1627, in which it is recorded that "The presentments of the minister and churchwardens of Stanley Hundred were delivered into the cort, under their hands. And also a register of marriages, burials and christenings."⁴⁵

A later patent of 26th December, 1643, to Captain William Peirce, proves the continued existence of the Stanley Hundred Church down to that date and also gives its location. This patent is for 2100 acres on Mulberry Island, "beginning at the mouth of a creek . . . which . . . divides this land from Baker's Necke where the church now standeth"⁴⁶ Patents for adjoining lands show that Baker's Neck lay just below the original Harwood plantation of Queen's Hithe, which was located near Mulberry Point at the head of Mulberry Island.

The original plantation of Stanley Hundred comprised one thousand acres in the middle of Mulberry Island and was granted to Sir

⁴³ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 189.

⁴⁴ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 8.

⁴⁵ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 145.

⁴⁶ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 149.

George Yeardley in consideration of the transportation of twelve persons to Virginia in 1621. It was sold by his widow to Lieutenant Thomas Flint in February, 1627/8,⁴⁷ and the sale was confirmed by patent of 20th September, 1628, granting Flint the same "one thousand acres upon the Southern shoare of Warwick River, easterly upon the land of Robert Poole, Gent., westerly towards the head of said river, adjoining next . . . unto John Rolfe, dec'd & Capt. William Peirce and South upon the maine river. Due by act of Court the 9th February, 1627 [1628]."⁴⁸

In the following year Stanley Hundred again changed hands, for the General Court records show that on 20th January, 1628/9, "Thomas flint and Mary his wife did Psonally come into this Court and surrendred all their . . . interest in one thousand acres of land scituate in Stanley Hundred with the L^{res} (Letters) patents . . . unto John Brewer Marchant."⁴⁹

The earliest recorded use of the name Mulberry Island Parish, for the larger organization that grew from the plantation parish of Stanley Hundred, appears to be found in a patent of 8th December, 1635, to "Mr. Willis Heyley, Minister, for two hundred fifty acres in the parish of Mulberry Island."⁵⁰ A previous patent to Heyley of 17th August in the same year, for the like amount of land, describes him as "Clarke and Pastor of Mulberry Island" and pays high tribute to his character by stating that this patent was "Granted by order of Court . . . upon a twofold consideration, first in reward of his faithful paines in the Ministrie exemplified by a godly and quiet life thereby seconding his doctrine, next as a spurr and encouragement for others of his calling to pursue soe faire and bright an example."⁵¹ Since presentments to the General Court had been made by the churchwardens of Stanley Hundred Parish as late as 1629,⁵² it seems probable that the enlargement and reorganization of this parish under the name Mulberry Island took place at the formation of Warwick County in 1634.

A land patent of 14th May, 1669, affords definite proof that the first Mulberry Island Church had passed out of existence prior to that date. The patent is to Mr. Thomas Iken [Aiken?] for 1350 acres of

⁴⁷ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 166.

⁴⁸ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 9.

⁴⁹ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 180.

⁵⁰ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 36.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, I, 30.

⁵² McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 200.

the same tract that was patented by Capt. William Peirce in 1643, but the later patent of 1669 describes the land as divided by a creek from "Baker's Neck, where the church formerly stood",⁵³ instead of "where the church now standeth", as in the earlier grant.

The exact location of the first Mulberry Island Church, built in Stanley Hundred about 1627, or earlier, has not been determined, but is tentatively indicated in Plate 20. Its site was long included within an active bombing range of the United States Army, and its exploration is therefore impracticable, due to the danger from unexploded bombs still in the ground.

The disappearance of the first Mulberry Island Church was due to its replacement by a later structure on a new site. This second church was probably erected in accordance with an act of assembly of March, 1661/2, ordering "that there be a church decently built in each parish of this country".⁵⁴

The first church had stood on Baker's Neck, near the head of Mulberry Island, but the second church was not on the island proper, as it lay a mile and a half northeast of the marshy creek which, at high tide, divides the island from the main land. It is probable that the first Mulberry Island Church was of the simplest type of frame construction, but its successor apparently was a brick building. This later church's foundation, which is quite evident at its site, reveals its dimensions as fifty feet by twenty-five feet, outside, with foundation walls two feet thick. The old churchyard is still overgrown with the white-flowering periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) found in many colonial burial-places, and lies on the west side of the old road from Lee Hall to Mulberry Island, about a mile south of its junction with U. S. Route 60.

This second church is probably the one mentioned in a record of 1724, in which the Reverend William Le Neve, rector of James City Parish, reported that he customarily preached two Sundays in three at his own church at James City, and on the third Sunday at Mulberry Island Church, to a congregation of two hundred, as against only one hundred thirty at Jamestown.⁵⁵ The later identity of this last Mulberry Island Church as the Upper Church of Warwick Parish is established by court orders of 1750-60, naming surveyors of the highways leading from "the Upper Church" to points on Mulberry Island.

⁵³ *Patent Book VI*, 218.

⁵⁴ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, II, 44.

⁵⁵ Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 265.

It is said that, following its abandonment as an Episcopal church, about 1830, the old Upper Church of Warwick was taken over by the Methodists, who later built a frame chapel on the opposite side of the road. The ancient building was finally occupied by the colored people, who still use the churchyard as a burial ground.

Another early parish was tentatively set up in the lower part of what is now Warwick County by an order of the General Court dated 4th March, 1628. This order rehearses that "Whereas M^r George Keth is lately arived, and by his dep^ture from Elizabeth City into England the place hee formerly held is already furnished and pvided for whereby hee is now destitute of a Chardge wherein to Pforme his Calling and Ministry the Co^{rt} hath thought fitt to order that those new plantations scituate between Marie's Mount and Waters his Creeke bee for the tyme beeing ioyned into one Pishe and Contribute to the mainteynance of M^r Keth such tythes and dueties as shall bee belonging to him."⁵⁶

"Marie's Mount" was the plantation of Daniel Gookin, settled in 1619 on the high ground north of Newport News.⁵⁷ "Waters his Creek" was named for Lieutenant Edward Waters, who patented land on its banks in 1624;⁵⁸ it has recently been dammed to form Lake Maury at the Mariners' Museum Park, six miles north of Newport News. Mr. Keith did not remain long in the parish thus set up for his support, since he is mentioned as "Pastor of Chiskiack" in a land grant of July, 1635.⁵⁹

This temporary parish organization was made permanent by an act of March, 1642/3, providing that "the inhabitants of the lower side of Waters Creek downward to the uttermost extent of Warwick Countie shall be a distinct parish of themselves and enjoy all the priviledges of a parish without any dependence or relation to the parish of Denbigh or any other parish whatever."⁶⁰

It is apparent that this unnamed parish was the one later known as Nutmeg Quarter, after the place of that name, shown by early land patents to have been situated inland of the head of Blunt Point Creek and about abreast of it. This is confirmed by the fact that Joseph Stratton of Nutmeg Quarter served as a burgess for that place, in the assembly of 1629-30, yet was representing the plantations

⁵⁶ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 189.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁵⁸ Eckenrode, *Highway Historical Markers* (1932), 117.

⁵⁹ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 29.



St. John's Church, Hampton, from churchyard.



PLATE 24. Denbeigh Baptist Church. (Note: Central portion, with Gothic windows, represents colonial church building.)

"From Waters Creek to Marie's Mount," only two years later. Furthermore, William Bentley, who had patented lands "between Blunt Point and Newport News" and was undoubtedly a resident of the parish in question, is recorded as a burgess for Nutmeg Quarter in 1629, confirming the identity of this parish.⁶¹ It seems probable that this parish's quaint name was derived from the prevalence of either sassafras or bay trees in the region known as Nutmeg Quarter, since the name "nutmeg" was anciently applied to any lauraceous tree bearing aromatic fruit.

The independent existence of Nutmeg Quarter Parish seems to have come to an end in 1656, when an act of assembly was passed requiring the county court to decide the question of its union with Denbigh Parish, in accordance with the wishes of a majority of its parishioners. This act provides that "Whereas a petition was presented to the honourable Grand Assembly . . . in behalf of the inhabitants of Nutmeg Quarter intimateing their desire by reason of their small number not longer to continue a parish of themselves, but to be united to the parish of Denbigh, it is ordered that the commissioners the next county court make enquire of the desires of the inhabitants, and if the major part agree unto it, then they are to be accompted and be members of the parish of Denbigh aforesaid otherwise to remaine a parish of themselves as at present."⁶² All record of the court's decision in this matter has been lost, but no further mention of Nutmeg Quarter as a parish has been found, and this union undoubtedly took place.

As the parish of Nutmeg Quarter had a separate existence of twenty-eight years, it seems certain that a church was built for it. Documentary evidence of the location of this church is found in a patent to Mr. Thomas Merrey, dated 22nd June, 1682, for 186 acres in Warwick County, located "southerly upon James River . . . beginning at Capt. John Langhorne's tree in a swatch by the river" and bounded "upon the chappel land."⁶³

Since the parish church of a merged parish automatically became a chapel of ease of the larger parish that had absorbed it, this is clearly a reference to Nutmeg Quarter Church in its later status as a chapel of Denbigh Parish. Study of the adjoining land grants

⁶⁰ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 278.

⁶¹ McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses, 1619-60*, x.

⁶² Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 425.

⁶³ *Patent Book VII*, 190.

shows that this ancient chapel stood near the James River bank, only a short distance east of Blunt Point.

The earliest recorded mention of Denbigh parish appears to be in a land patent dated 11th July, 1635, to Thomas Butler, "Clarke and Pastor of Denbie," for one thousand acres of land in Warrasquioake (later Isle of Wight) County.⁶⁴ The existence of a church of this parish at this early period is established by a bequest in the will of Anthony Yonge, citizen and grocer of London, dated 23rd February, 1635/6, proved 1st December, 1636, leaving "To Denby Church 500 lbs of Tobacco". That this was the church of Denbigh Parish in Warwick County is clearly proven by bequests made in the same will to the church of the neighboring Virginia parish of New Poquoson and to Captain Samuel Mathews, owner of Denbigh plantation, from which this parish had developed.⁶⁵

The plantation of Denbigh was situated at the mouth of Warwick River, on the mainland opposite the lower end of Mulberry Island. Once in the possession of Abraham Peirse, "Cape Merchant," who came to Virginia in 1616 and died in 1628, it had passed to Captain Samuel Mathews upon his marriage to Peirse's widow. A traveller who visited Denbigh in 1649 reported that the Captain "keeps a good house, lives bravely, and [is] a true lover of Virginia". His plantation was like a miniature village, employing many servants and well-stocked with cattle, hogs and poultry, and was equipped with spinning and weaving houses, a large dairy, tannery and cobbler's shop, so as to be practically self-sustaining.⁶⁶ It was later the colonial home of the Cole and Digges families and the site is still marked by large old cedars, lofty box hedges and a terraced lawn, although the ancient house has long since disappeared.

An act of assembly passed in November, 1647, gives the boundaries of Denbigh and Mulberry Island Parishes, as finally determined, in these words: "Upon a controversie betweene the parishioners of Denbigh parish and the parishioners of Mulberry Island for their certaine bounds and Lymitts of their severall parishes: Bee it enacted and established for avoyding of all future uncertainty herein That the bounds of Mulberry Island parish shall be and beginne on the North side of the land knowne by the name of Brewers land, including the Mill land on both sides of the River. And that Denbigh parish

⁶⁴ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 26.

⁶⁵ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XV, 177.

⁶⁶ Neil, *Virginia Carolorum*, III.

shall beeginne from the Mill land on the South side of the River, and extend to Nutmeg quarter parish.”⁶⁷

The “mill land” mentioned in this act appears to have been the watershed surrounding the mill pond at the head of Warwick River, now the Newport News City Reservoir, and “Brewer’s land” was Stanley Hundred, as already brought out in this chapter, by the record of its sale to John Brewer in 1628/9. The reference to Nutmeg Quarter confirms a previous conclusion that this parish occupied the lower end of the county.

Published lists of the colonial parishes of Virginia in 1680,⁶⁸ 1702⁶⁹ and 1714⁷⁰ all give the parishes in Warwick County as Denbigh and Mulberry Island, but a list for 1726 shows that these two parishes had by then been combined into one, known as Warwick parish.⁷¹ A report made by Commissary Blair to the Bishop of London in July, 1724, definitely refers to “Denby and Mulberry Island” as one parish,⁷² and it seems probable that their union was confirmed, and the combined parish renamed Warwick, by an act of the General Assembly of 1725, whose proceedings have not been preserved.

That the new parish of Warwick was coterminous with the county of the same name is clearly proven by a list of tithables of 1753, in which the parish is divided into four precincts, extending from “Stanley Hundred Precinct” (on Mulberry Island) and “the Upper Precinct” (on the main land) down “to the lower end of County.”⁷³ Two churches existed in Warwick parish at its formation, of which Denbigh Church became the lower church, while Mulberry Island Church became the upper one.

Evidence that the first Denbigh Church of 1636 or earlier, which had become the Lower Church of Warwick Parish, was replaced by a new frame church on a site closely adjacent to the original one, is found in Bishop Meade’s account of Warwick County’s colonial churches and ministers. In this account, he states that “Within a few miles of Denbigh farm is . . . old Denbigh Church. I paid a visit to the latter and found it in a much better condition than I could have expected. It is in the parish called Upper Denbigh, there being for-

⁶⁷ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XXIII, 247.

⁶⁸ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, I, 243.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 377.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, II, 13.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, XLVIII, 151.

⁷² Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 258.

⁷³ *Warwick County Minutes*, 1748-62, 226.

merly one called Lower Denbigh. The present building was erected 110 years since; and the weatherboarding was so well done, and was of such excellent material, that it is still good. The foundation of an older one is plainly to be traced a short distance behind it, in the woods which come up to the present church, which is only a few yards from the main Warwick road leading up and down the county."⁷⁴

Additional details in regard to the second Denbigh Church are given by Bishop Meade in this further reference: "The last [Episcopal] ministers who officiated at Denbigh Church were the Rev. Mr. Camm, the son of the Rev. Commissary Camm, and a Mr. Wood,—both of them respectable men. They officiated at some other place or places in Warwick at the same time. The old high-backed pews are still retained. I was told that after the Episcopal Church had ceased to have services in this church, and other denominations had taken possession, on the occasion of some protracted and very exciting meeting, when the old pews seemed to be in the way of promoting a revival, it was proposed from the pulpit that they be taken away and benches put in place of them. The measure was about to be carried, when a young man, whose ancestors had worshipped in the old church as it was, rose up and protested against it, saying that he would appeal to the law and prevent it."⁷⁵

The Bishop's statement, as to the parishes of Upper and Lower Denbigh, cannot be authenticated, since no documentary reference to parishes bearing such names has yet been found. It may have been based on a misunderstanding of the colonial wording commonly used in referring to the upper and lower precincts of an undivided parish as the "Upper Parish" and "Lower Parish" of that name. His further statement on an earlier page, that "there were, at one time, not less than eight parishes in Warwick," appears to be equally unfounded, in view of the county's small size and the recorded facts, especially as he names only four of these parishes and incorrectly locates one of them.⁷⁶

Since the Bishop wrote in 1857, the date he assigns for the construction of the second Denbigh Church is 1747. This date appears to be disproved by an advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* of 20th

⁷⁴ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 241.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 242.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 240.

August, 1772, announcing that "The Building of the lower Church of Warwick Parish, of Wood, fifty feet by twenty-four, will be let to the lowest Bidder at Warwick Court House, on Thursday, the 11th of September, being Court Day, by the Church Wardens."⁷⁷ The actual date of completion of this church, although unrecorded, was probably in 1774.

The site of colonial Denbigh Church is now occupied by the present Denbeigh Baptist Church, held for over a century by a congregation organized in 1834. This church, a white-painted frame building, stands in the old churchyard on the north side of Warwick Road, now U. S. Route 60, just east of the head of Deep Creek. The existing church building's oldest portion, which once stood alone, but has repeatedly been enlarged by additions on two sides, was rebuilt out of the remains of the second Denbigh Church, some of whose worm-eaten timbers are still incorporated in the present structure.

According to older members of the congregation, this reconstruction took place about 1898. Until that time, the old church had retained much of its colonial appearance, although it was stripped of pews, pulpit and most of its interior woodwork during the Civil War, when it traditionally was used as a stable by Federal troops. The roof, as originally built, had "clipped gables", being hipped half-way down from the ridge, at both ends of the building. During the remodelling, the gables were carried all the way up, as at present, the old square-topped windows were altered to Gothic form and new sills were installed on the original foundation. According to colonial custom, the old church had a main west doorway and a side doorway in the south wall, near the chancel. Its interior had an old-style barrel ceiling and a gallery in the west end, lighted by two windows in the gable. In the course of the old building's modernization, all of its visible materials have been completely renewed, including the brick foundation.

That the Lower Church of Warwick Parish, thus advertised above, was actually the "old Denbigh Church" described by Meade, is apparent from a study of the size and orientation of this oldest portion of Denbeigh Baptist Church, which reveals its identity with the new church of 1774 by two significant points of agreement. First, it lies exactly east-and-west, as a colonial church would have done; and second, it checks closely in size with the advertised dimensions, being

⁷⁷ *Virginia Gazette*, files at State Library, Richmond.

fifty feet two inches by twenty-four feet, inside the weatherboarding.

The foundation of the first Denbigh Church of 1636, or earlier, is still plainly visible in the churchyard, about thirty yards behind its successor, the second church of 1774, and exactly in line with it. This ancient foundation is of cobblestones mixed with blocks of native marl, hardened to rock-like consistency by long exposure to the elements, and shows this pioneer building to have been a frame building of the same dimensions as the later Denbigh Church, or about fifty by twenty-four feet, outside. The entire area of the churchyard has been used for later graves, but a burial made here, while this first church was yet in service, is still commemorated by a gravestone. This is the handsome altar tomb, with armorial bearings, of Mary Harrison, who died in 1744; she was the daughter of Cole Digges, of nearby Denbigh plantation, and the wife of Nathaniel Harrison of Prince George County.

The survival, unchanged, of the primitive first Denbigh Church of 1636, until its replacement by the church of 1774, nearly one and a half centuries later, seems improbable, to say the least. It is altogether likely, therefore, that it was either completely rebuilt or replaced by a new church, at some time before the close of the seventeenth century. If a new church was built, it is reasonable to suppose that it was also a frame building and that it occupied the same site as the later church of 1774. The lack of documentary proof for this earlier replacement of the first Denbigh Church might be attributable to the loss of county and parish records for the period suggested.

Old Denbigh Church continued in use as an Episcopal Church until 1818, when its last minister, Mr. John Wood, went back to England to die ten years later, his health having been shattered by poison placed in the family's food by a negro servant, at his lodging-place in Virginia.⁷⁸ The other place at which, according to Bishop Meade, the last two colonial ministers of Denbigh Church also officiated, was, in all probability, Mulberry Island Church, in whose churchyard burials were still being made as late as 1822, when Peyton Southall of Yorktown was interred there, near the tomb of his father and mother.⁷⁹

The only remaining complete order book of Warwick County was picked up on Mulberry Island, with a bullet hole through its lower

⁷⁸ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), XII, 206.

⁷⁹ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XLV, 288.

margin, following the pillaging of the Warwick County clerk's office by Federal troops, during the Civil War. It covers the period from 1748 to 1762 and shows the vestry of Warwick to have been active in presenting delinquent parishioners "for not frequenting their parish church." These entries indicate the prevalence of dissent arising from the growth of other denominations in the county, and presage the downfall of the Established Church following the Revolution.⁸⁰

Minutes of the Overseers of the Poor for Warwick Parish, who succeeded the parish vestry in the administration of relief to the poor of the county, in 1786, after the disestablishment of the Episcopal Church, show that the Warwick vestry had held no meetings since 1780. The system of levying tithes for maintenance of the county's poor, even though such tithes could not legally be assessed for the support of the church after the year 1776, was continued throughout the period covered by this minute book, which closed in 1860, at the onset of the Civil War. The Overseers of the Poor carried out the sale of the parish glebe lands, confiscated under the Act of 1802, and the invested proceeds were, in 1806, partly appropriated to the construction of new county buildings, which were not completed until nearly five years later. Although only a new court house and jail were originally covered by this appropriation, it seems probable that the existing Warwick County Clerk's Office was included in the same project, since the date 1810 is inscribed on a brick tile inset above the lintel of the entrance doorway to the oldest portion of this building.

Following the final abandonment of its colonial churches, about 1830, Warwick Parish remained dormant for half a century, until, with the coming of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway and the development of Newport News as its terminal city, religious services of the Episcopal Church were actively resumed in Warwick County. These services were first held at Morrison, in 1880, as a mission of St. John's Church, Hampton, and were later extended to Newport News, where St. Paul's Church is now the parish church.

⁸⁰ *Warwick County Minutes, 1748-62*, 30, 404.

Princess Anne County Churches

OUR KNOWLEDGE of the colonial churches of Lynnhaven Parish in Princess Anne County, Virginia, is derived from original sources that are exceptionally rich in themselves and supplemented by well-authenticated tradition. These original sources include county records extending back to the date of establishment of both Princess Anne and its parent county, Lower Norfolk, as well as an eighteenth-century vestry book for Lynnhaven Parish.

The name Lynnhaven, associated with the parish from its beginning, is traditionally credited to Adam Thorowgood, an early magistrate and vestryman, who settled here in the year 1634, when this entire territory was set off, under the name Elizabeth City, as one of the eight original shires into which the Virginia colony was divided at that time. Thorowgood came to these shores from Lynn in Norfolk County, England, and is said to have named for his early home the stream on which he settled, calling it Lynnhaven River instead of Chesapeake River, as it is designated in the earliest land patents.¹

The present Princess Anne County was once included in New Norfolk, a large county believed to have been formed, about 1636, out of Elizabeth City County east of Hampton Roads. An early script of the Act of Assembly of 1639, setting bounds for Lower Norfolk County, apparently formed about two years prior to the date of the Act, out of the eastern part of New Norfolk County, shows that this act also created a coterminous parish of the same name.²

Early court records of Lower Norfolk County, however, reveal that by 1640 there were within its bounds two distinct church bodies, one in the upper section of the county, near Elizabeth River and Hampton Roads, and the other in the lower section, near Lynnhaven River and Chesapeake Bay. The former became Elizabeth River Parish and is sometimes credited with an earlier origin than Lynnhaven Parish, which developed in the lower part of the county, but there seems to be little evidence of priority for either parish.

Definite boundaries for Lynnhaven Parish were first established in 1642, by an act of assembly,³ the wording of which implies that there

¹ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 38.

² Robinson, *Virginia Counties*, 198.

³ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 250.

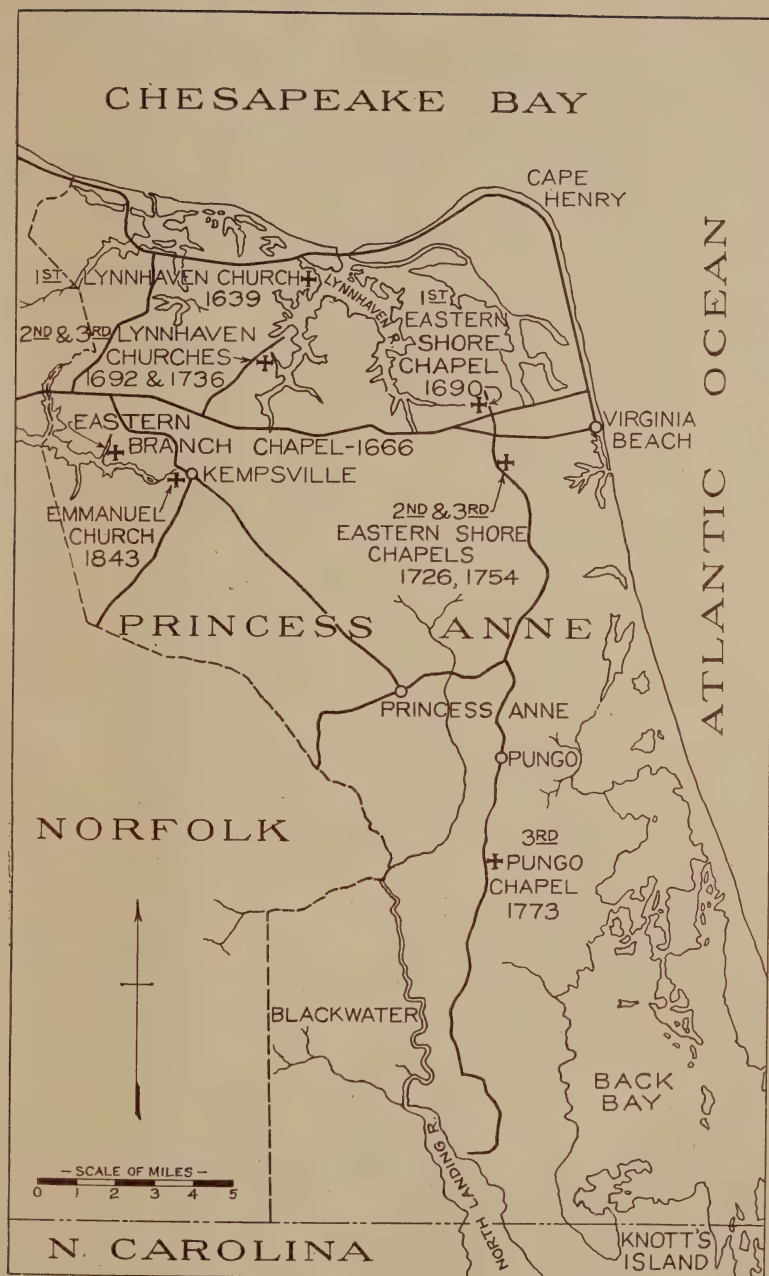
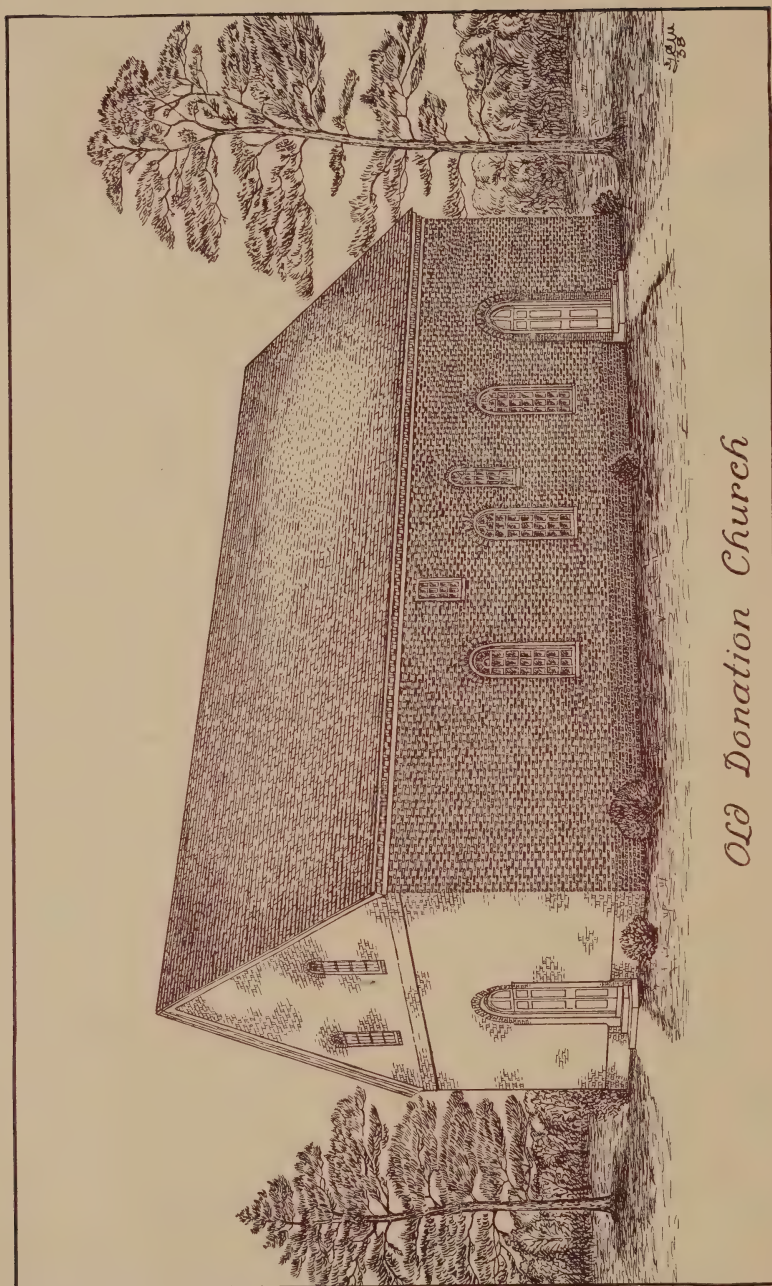


PLATE 25. Map of Princess Anne County.



Old Donation Church

Donation Church in 1776, exterior.

were then two other parishes of the Established Church in Lower Norfolk County, known as Elizabeth River and Southern Shore. As bounded by this act, Lynnhaven Parish extended to Broad Creek on the north side of the Eastern Branch of Elizabeth River and to Indian River on its south side, so that Southern Shore Parish is believed to have included the remaining territory south of the Eastern Branch, to the contemporary limits of settlement in the county. There is some evidence that the Southern Shore Church may have been included within the bounds set for Lynnhaven Parish and was therefore absorbed by it, although most of Southern Shore Parish's area lay within the present Elizabeth River Parish. The county records show that Southern Shore had ceased to exist as a parish by 1645, and no further documentary reference to it has been found.

Some have interpreted this boundary act as forming Lynnhaven Parish out of Elizabeth River Parish, which is assumed by them to have succeeded Lower Norfolk Parish as the parish coterminous with Lower Norfolk County. Since the act of 1642 opens with the words "Upon the petition of the inhabitants of Lynnhaven Parish, it is further enacted and confirmed that the parish of Lynnhaven be bounded as followeth:", interpretation of this act as creating Lynnhaven Parish would mean that the inhabitants of a non-existent parish had petitioned for bounds to be set for it, before it had been created, a completely untenable position. The act further provides that the boundaries set for Lynnhaven Parish "be not prejudicial" to the other two parishes "by taking away any part of them." Since Lynnhaven Parish could not possibly have been created by the act of 1642, without taking away all of its area from either or both of the other two parishes in the county, it follows that all three parishes must have been coexistent and contemporary.

When Princess Anne County was formed out of the eastern section of Lower Norfolk in 1691,⁴ a part of Lynnhaven Parish was left in the latter county until four years later, when an act of assembly⁵ of 1695 made the new county coterminous with the parish. These boundaries remained unchanged for two centuries, with Lynnhaven the only parish in Princess Anne county, until 1895, when East Lynnhaven parish was formed out of the eastern portion of the county's area.

The earliest hint of church services in the territory which later became known as Lynnhaven Parish is found in the first entry in the

⁴ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, III, 95.

⁵ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, III, 128.

Lower Norfolk records, dated 15th May, 1637. This entry suggests that these services were being held in private homes at that early date, since a penance ordinarily imposed for performance during services in the parish church is ordered to be carried out "at the dwelling house of Capt. Thorowgood".⁶ As all the parties to the order were residents of Lynnhaven, like Captain Thorowgood, it seems evident that the services involved were held in that locality. This record carries with it a strong presumption that no church building was then in service at Lynnhaven. There is even stronger evidence that the same situation existed at that time in what later became Elizabeth River Parish, the record in this case being an order for a penance to be performed at the house of Captain John Sibsey, "during the time of divine service", the date of this order being 19th July, 1637.⁷

As a matter of record, it appears that the first Lynnhaven parish church building antedated that of Elizabeth River in its completion. In proof of this, we find a Lower Norfolk court order of 18th October, 1639, referring to "the Parish Church at Linnhaven" as already in existence, while the same records indicate that the first Elizabeth River Parish Church, at Seawell's Point, was begun in accordance with an order of council issued before the county's formation in 1637, but remained unfinished and ruinous until 1638,⁸ as the parish church of Lower Norfolk Parish (then coterminous with the county), and was not repaired and completed until 1640.⁹ The first record of Lynnhaven's official existence as a parish seems to have been in 1640, when its first known vestry was chosen at a court held for Lower Norfolk on 3rd August of that year, although its church building evidently existed prior to the formation of a governing body for the parish. A similar record is found, only a month earlier, for Elizabeth River Parish.

It seems manifest that the church mentioned in the above court order of 1639 was the first church in Lynnhaven Parish and it was probably built in that year. This first church was constructed on Adam Thorowgood's land,¹⁰ at what has ever since been known as Church Point, on the west side of the Western Branch of Lynnhaven River, and at his death in 1640, Thorowgood left one thousand pounds of tobacco to Lynnhaven Parish Church "for the purchase of some necessary and decent ornament."

⁶ *Lower Norfolk County Minute Book*, 1637-46, fol. 1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 3.

⁸ James, *Lower Norfolk Antiquary*, I, 82.

⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 141.

¹⁰ White, *Gleanings in Princess Anne History*, 6.

The remains of this building were still visible in 1850, and were in evidence as a mound of brick, within the memory of living residents of the county. The site has since been cleared, but quantities of old brick may be seen on the river bottom off this point, at low tide, tending to confirm the tradition that the building was of brick construction. This tradition has little else to confirm it, however, as it apparently arose, through the prevailing confusion of identity between the first church and its immediate successor, from the fact that this later building is called "the Brick Church" in the vestry book, as we shall see, later on. Even the old bricks formerly seen at the first church's site cannot be considered conclusive evidence as to its type of construction, since they may have been the remains of the brick foundation of a frame building, while the brick deposits on the river bottom may have come from a former churchyard wall, in keeping with the tradition given below.

This tradition, handed down by Bishop Meade¹¹ and confirmed in 1879 by the Rev. C. B. Bryan,¹² on the authority of Mr. Solomon Keeling, an aged inhabitant of the county, relates that at some unknown date, apparently late in the eighteenth century, most of the old church's burial ground was washed away, as the result of a curious train of circumstances. According to this tradition, the waters of Lynnhaven River once reached Chesapeake Bay through a long, narrow estuary, running parallel to the bay shore and discharging through a mouth two or three miles to the westward, so that the fishermen of the parish had to travel about six miles by water, in order to reach their fishing grounds in Lynnhaven Bay, opposite their homes. As Lynnhaven River, at its junction with this estuary, was only separated from the bay by a sand bar a quarter mile wide, these fishermen at length decided to shorten their trip by joining the two bodies of water with a canal just wide enough to pass their fishing canoes. This simple project, once accomplished, had unforeseen and far-reaching consequences, for the narrow channel, dug with grubbing hoes, was soon enlarged by wind and tide into the present broad Lynnhaven Inlet.

Furthermore, although the old church was situated more than a mile from Chesapeake Bay, the heavy seas admitted through this new breach in the shore line gradually undermined the ancient churchyard, most of whose gravestones found a final resting-place on the bottom of Lynnhaven River. Here, according to Bishop Meade's classic version

¹¹ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 246.

¹² Bryan, *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, 150.

of the traditional story as published in 1857,¹³ Commodore Decatur and another eminent person, in swimming at this point in 1819, were able to decipher the tombstone inscriptions with their toes! Without the river current to keep it open, the original channel, connecting Lynnhaven with Little Creek, as the western end of the estuary has always been called, has long since filled up and is now represented only by a series of widely separated lagoons.

According to Bishop Meade's informant, the waters of Chesapeake Bay, when admitted through the channel dug by the fishermen, overran the lowlands south of the estuary and actually created the present Lynnhaven River, thus cutting off the old church from its glebe or parish farm, which was left on the opposite shore. Since these lowlands would have had to lie below sea-level, in order to be thus over-run, and the parish glebe, a gift from the Thorowgood family, had been granted to Adam Thorowgood by a patent of 1635, locating it on the eastern side of Lynnhaven River, evidently already in existence, this account is hardly credible. The later version given above, which can be reconciled with the records and present topography, therefore seems preferable.

Nevertheless, the Bishop's informant, speaking from memory instead of tradition, tells of having seen, within forty years of that date (1857), the bones of buried parishioners protruding from the river bank, and broken tombstones strewn along the shore, thus giving strong confirmation of the legendary washing away of the first church's ancient graveyard. It was not entirely washed away, for the armorial tombstone of Mrs. Sarah Yeardley (formerly Adam Thorowgood's widow), buried there in 1657, and of her second husband, Capt. John Gookin, was still visible at Church Point as late as 1819,¹⁴ when its inscription was published in a Richmond newspaper. This much-married lady was lastly the wife of Captain Francis Yeardley, which accounts for the variation in her name.

The above conclusion, as to the incredibility of the Bishop's account, is supported by the historian William S. Forrest, who summarizes the traditional creation of Lynnhaven River through the flooding of the lowlands as "of course, all a mistake, a simple impossibility." He relates, as the correct version, that "Until about the time of the Revolutionary War, the inlet to the waters of Lynnhaven was the Pleasure House Creek . . . about two miles west of the present inlet. Adam Keel-

¹³ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 247.

¹⁴ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, V, 435; XII, 202.

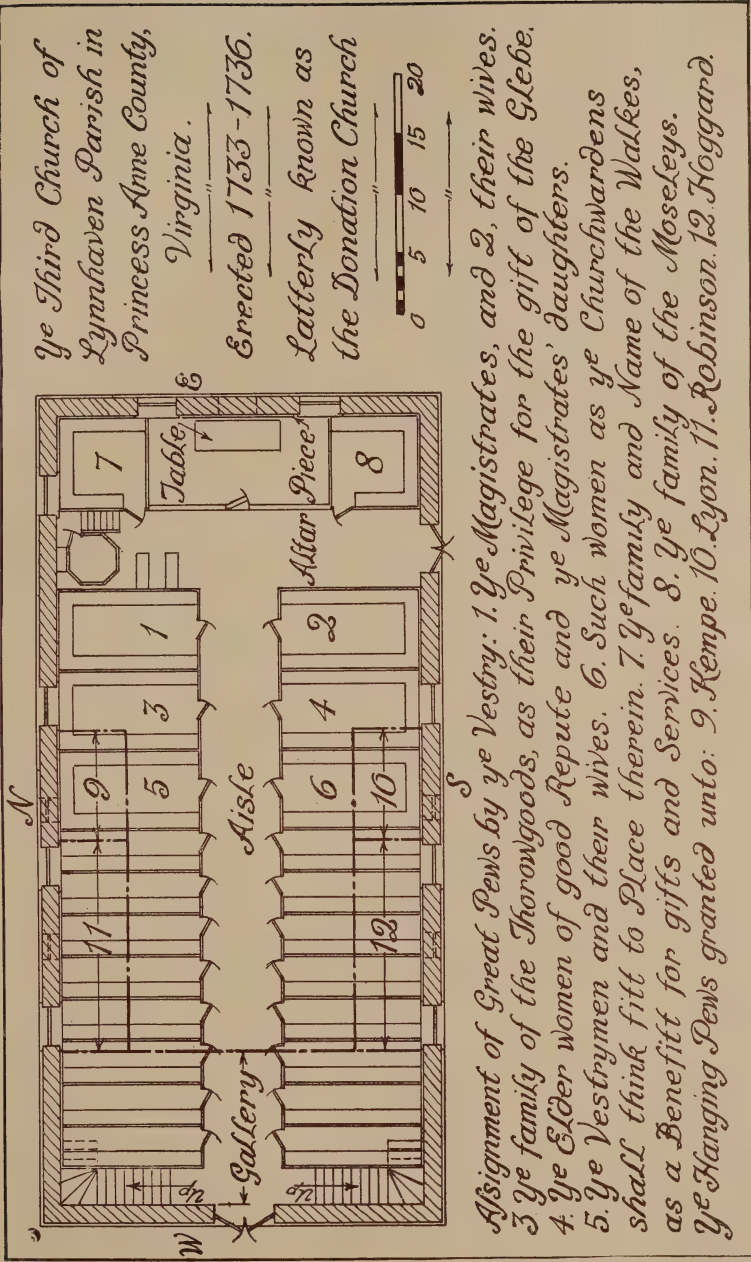


PLATE 27 Donation Church in 1776, interior arrangement. Assignment of pews is from the vestry book.



PLATE 28

Old Donation Church, today.

ing, Esq., . . . desiring a shorter connexion with the Chesapeake than that afforded by the creek, . . . caused a dike [ditch] to be cut across . . . [between] the river and the bay . . . greatly to his . . . convenience in fishing on the bay shore . . . The water running rapidly out at ebb-tide and in at flood, through this narrow dike, it was soon enlarged . . . until a wide channel was formed, now known as Lynnhaven Inlet.¹⁵

It is nevertheless evident that the result of the fishermen's project was not the creation of a new inlet, but the reopening of an old one, which had become closed by the "silting-up" process, always in action at the mouth of a tidal river, having formed a bar across the original entrance. This is proved by the oldest authentic map of Virginia, made by Augustin Herrman in 1673, which clearly shows Lynnhaven River opening into Chesapeake Bay through a wide inlet entirely disconnected from Little Creek, as at present.

It is apparent that this reopening took place just before the Revolutionary War, as stated by Forrest, since a map of that period, made for the British General Clinton in 1781, shows exactly the conditions described in the traditional story, with a narrow, short, straight channel at Lynnhaven Inlet and the original Little Creek passage still open to the west.

It is also likely that the washing away of the old church's graveyard was not a sudden catastrophe, as implied by the Bishop's account, but was rather the gradual result of years of erosion, as in the case of Jamestown Island. This would account for the effects of this erosion having been still visible, a generation after the Revolutionary War, in the form of bones protruding from the river bank.

Repeated references to this first church in court orders and wills of Lower Norfolk County, from 1637 to 1687, are evidence of its continued use for at least a half century. The old church's increasing age, however, made frequent repairs necessary, until, on the 28th March, 1691, the year in which Princess Anne county was created, the vestry ordered its replacement by a new building. There are no seventeenth century vestry records available for this parish, but the new county's court order book contains an agreement dated 1st April, 1691, between the vestry and Mr. Jacob Johnson, for the construction of "a good and Substantiall Brick Church" for the parish of Lynnhaven.

This document, although dated only a few days after the vestry's order, was not recorded until seven years later, on the 9th September,

¹⁵ Forrest, *Historical Sketches of Norfolk*, 457.

1698. It contains a complete specification for the new church, which calls for it to be "fourty five foot in length and twenty two foot in breadth Cleare between the walls, . . . to be thirteen foot in heighth . . . with brick gable Ends to the Ridge of the rooffe & a brick porch ten foott Square proportionable. The Rooffe . . . to be Substantial good framed worke . . . Sufficiently covered with good Oaken boards, the inside . . . well sealed with good Sealing Oake boards Arch wise and whited with good white lime, and to have good and Sufficient lights of brick and to well glase them with good glass on each Side of the church and at the East End a good large window fitt and proportionable for Such a Church. . . . The body of the said Church from the Doore at the west End to the Chancell to be well fitted with a Row of Pews on each side Thirty Foot, the other Fifteen for a Wainscott Pew on each side, and the rest for the Chancell with benches necessary, and the Church to be well plaistered & whited within and a good Pulpitt on the north Side."

According to Bishop Meade, benches in the chancel, such as those specified above, were provided for the use of the poor, who occupied them after the wealthier members of the congregation were seated in the pews. He also states that the chancel doorway, regularly fitted in the south side of a colonial church, was intended to allow paupers to reach their seats in the chancel unobtrusively and without passing through the congregation.¹⁶ Although not specified, a chancel doorway was provided in the new brick church above, as proven by a later reference to such a doorway, in the vestry book.

The agreement for the building of this second Lynnhaven Parish Church calls for the structure to be completed by the end of June, 1692, at latest, under penalty of 100,000 pounds of tobacco, thus allowing only fifteen months for its construction. Another unique feature of this agreement, beside the heavy penalty, is that it makes the price for the new church equal to "the Just, full & compleat Sum and quantity of good tobacco and Caske as hath . . . been Leavyed for and Expended upon the first building and Continuall repairing the Old Church now standing, from its first beginning to this Day." As it also authorizes the contractor "to have all things as he shall find good & Convenient to be made use of in the old Church to help furnish and finish the Church above mentioned," it seems clear that the ancient church near the bay shore, while evidently still standing in 1691, passed out of service, if not out of existence, upon completion of the new brick church of 1692.

¹⁶ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, II, 358.

Further proof of the construction and probable location of this second Lynnhaven Parish Church is found in the Princess Anne County archives, which record a deed made in 1694 by Ebenezer Taylor to the parish vestry for two acres of land "whereon the new brick church of Lynnhaven now stands," these two acres being part of a "plantacon or tract of land containing about one hundred acres on the western shore of linhaven."¹⁷ A year later, Taylor made deed to Richard Corbette for the remainder of the tract, carefully excluding the two acres previously sold to the vestry as a site for a church already built thereon. This was a common practice, apparently, in colonial Virginia, several of its churches having been constructed upon sites not deeded to the parish until years afterwards.¹⁸

The deed made by Taylor in 1694 conforms with the construction agreement of 1691, which locates the new church "on the western Shore of Linhaven upon the plantacon Appertaining to Mr. Ebenezer Taylor neare the road toward the ferry." The ferry mentioned was one established a few years earlier, across the Western Branch of Lynnhaven River, near the point known today as Witch Duck, after the historic witchcraft trial of Grace Sherwood in 1705. Near this ferry was a fifty-acre tract still called the Ferry Farm.

The relationship between the colonial church and court-house was very close and they were frequently located on adjoining sites. In accordance with this custom, a court-house for the new Princess Anne County was, on the 12th September, 1695, ordered to be erected "Upon the land belonging to the Brick Church",¹⁹ referring to the two-acre site purchased from Ebenezer Taylor in the previous year for the second Lynnhaven Church.

This court-house was not the first one in service in Princess Anne County, since it succeeded an earlier frame court-house ordered on 17th September, 1689, to be built on the Eastern Shore of Lynnhaven, near the southern end of Great Neck, as a local court building for Lower Norfolk County.²⁰ It was nevertheless the first court-house built for the new county after its creation in 1691 and was largely constructed out of the timbers of the earlier building, which were shipped by

¹⁷ *Princess Anne County Deeds*, I, 68.

¹⁸ Cf. Marston Church (Tyler, *Williamsburg*, 93), Magothy Bay and Hungars Churches (Howard, *Colonial Churches of Virginia*, 103), and Cypress Church (Bohannon, *Old Surry*, 45).

¹⁹ *Princess Anne County Orders, 1691-1709*, I, Part 1, 87.

²⁰ *Lower Norfolk County Deeds, 1686-1695*, XV, 146.

boat across Lynnhaven River to the new site beside the brick church.²¹ This earlier court-house itself had been built near a church, as described later in this chapter.

The only colonial vestry book of Lynnhaven Parish, known to be in existence, opens in 1723, enabling us to trace the further history of the parish churches in much greater detail. That the vestry did not permanently relieve the parish of the expense of "the continuall repairing" of their church, when they replaced their first house of worship with a new one in 1692, is revealed by a vestry order of 16th November, 1724, describing the decayed condition of the second building, after thirty-odd years of service. This order records that "Whereas it was agreed with Mr. John Bolitho to repair the South side of the brick church [roof] but upon Examination it proved so rotten and unsound that the same could not be repaired and thereupon agreed with Mr. George Smyth to pull down the whole roof and put up a New one." Later entries show that further expense of this sort was avoided by coating the roofs of all the parish buildings with native tar, which, in the words of a modern historian of the parish, Rev. C. B. Bryan, "does not produce a thing of beauty, but comes near lasting forever."²²

On the 15th September, 1724, permission was granted to Capt. Hillary Moseley "to erect a pewe at his own cost over the chancel doors taking up as little room as possible, the stairs to go up behind the said Chancel doors." The erection of these private galleries was a recognized privilege of the aristocracy in the colonial parishes, the restriction as to space, in this case, being dictated by the small size of the church, which, it will be remembered, was only forty-five feet by twenty-two feet, inside.

With the rapid increase of colonial wealth and population that took place at the beginning of the eighteenth century, this little edifice was soon outgrown, and we find, under date of 11th August, 1733, resolutions by the vestry approving "the ferry plantation as a fit and convenient place to set a New Church and that the same be there erected." It is significant, as an indication of the second church's having been outgrown, that the new church was specified to be "Sixty five foot long & thirty foot wide from inside to inside, the walls fifteen foot high, three bricks thick to the water table and two bricks to the top," giving the new building more than twice as much interior space as

²¹ *Princess Anne County Orders, 1691-1709*, I, Part 1, 119.

²² Bryan, *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, 149.

its diminutive predecessor afforded. As a site for this church, one acre of land at the ferry was to be valued by certain vestrymen, who were also to contract for 60,000 bricks for the new building.

The usual close connection between church and court-house is evident in the vestry's choice of a church site, since a two-acre lot at the ferry had already been deeded to the county in 1730, "in order that a court house may be there erected", and the vestry seems to have desired to maintain the existing association between church and court.

The order locating the church at the ferry was, nevertheless, rescinded only three months later, on the 13th November, 1733, when the vestry "unanimously agreed that the New Church be placed where the old one now stands," and Peter Malbone was selected to build it. This decision to place the new church "where the old one now stands" cannot be taken too literally, however, since it was evidently carried out by erecting the new structure adjacent to the old one on the two-acre site deeded to the parish in 1694.

Since this adjacent position was already occupied by the old frame court-house of 1695, it seems apparent that the vestry's change of front was prompted by the actual removal of this old county building from the church property, upon the approaching completion of the new brick court-house at the ferry. It therefore follows that the new church, in all probability, was erected upon the exact site of this old court building, the first that had been built for the new county of Princess Anne.

In confirmation of these conclusions, the use of a sounding rod on the site of the existing "Donation Church" reveals strong evidence of the former presence of another building about seventy feet to the south and a little west of the present church, in the form of brick rubble under the surface of the ground. That these remains represent the foundations of the brick church of 1692 cannot be proved without complete excavation, but the following reasons would seem to justify a belief that they do so: First, they appear to follow the outlines of a rectangular building whose dimensions agree closely with those specified for the church of 1692; second, they lie parallel with the walls of Donation Church, which has its long axis running east and west, as ecclesiastical law required all colonial churches to be placed; and third, these remains are just in front of the present graveyard and this represents the most probable location for an earlier church, since this graveyard, although its only colonial tombstones have been moved here from

old plantations in the county, is filled with unmarked graves and is evidently an ancient burial ground.

We are by no means dependent upon the sounding rod, however, for evidence that the second church of 1692 was not torn down to make room for its successor, since we have definite proof of this fact in a vestry order giving the old church "as a convenient place to make a public School off for instructing children in learning," and dated the 2nd March, 1736, when the new church must have been practically complete.

In Bishop Meade's account of the parish,²³ the church building converted into a school is erroneously identified with the first Lynnhaven Church near the bay shore, apparently because he was entirely unaware of the existence of the second church of 1692, and this misconception has been perpetuated by later writers.²⁴ It seems obvious that this ancient church could not have been fit for use as a school in 1736, since it had then been out of service for nearly forty-five years, and its site could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be described as a "convenient place" for a school, for it was remote from the center of county life of that period as shown by the location of both the courthouse and parish church near the ferry.

Strong evidence of a contemporary demand for a schoolhouse at the ferry, tending to confirm identification of the converted building as the church of 1692, is found in a series of early eighteenth century court orders for Princess Anne County.²⁵ The first of these, dated 2nd March, 1712, reads: "Whereas, Mr. Samuelli Sheppard peticoned this Court for liberty to erect a Schoole house on the Court House land for Common Benefitt, W^{ch} upon consideration of the Advantage that may arrive from the same, it is ordered accordingly, provided he Build the Same as far as he cann from the Church and Court House," which appears to substantiate the adjacent location of the two buildings last mentioned. A second court order, dated the following day, gave the petitioner "Liberty to keep School in the Court house till a School house be built," but it does not appear that the projected school building was ever erected, since we find, only four years later, a court order of the 6th March, 1716, granting George Shurly "liberty for his servant Peter Taylor to keep Schoole in the Court house and jury room . . . as a reasonable and usuall practice," indicating that the previous tempo-

²³ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 248.

²⁴ Bryan, *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, 150.

²⁵ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, III, 193.

rary arrangement had been made permanent. When the old church of 1692 was replaced by a new one, the vestry was quick to realize that the old building's availability for school purposes offered a better solution of this problem and the order for its conversion ensued.

The third Lynnhaven parish church was accepted by the vestry on the 25th June, 1736. In view of the recorded facts as to the existence of an earlier church in this location, there seems to be no room for doubt that the present Old Donation Church is this third Lynnhaven parish church of 1736, but if further proof of Old Donation's identity be required, it may be found in the exact agreement between its dimensions and those specified for the third church and in the date 1736 cut in a brick to the right of the front door. The stone tablet set in the front wall of the existing church, at its restoration in 1916, is therefore in error in giving the date of its construction as 1694. The same error would seem to have been made in the state highway historical marker at the cross-road leading to the old church, which states that Donation Church was "first built before 1694," but this may be taken as referring to the second Lynnhaven Church, on an adjacent site.

It does not appear, however, that the name "Donation Church" was ever applied to this second church or even that it was applied to the third church during colonial times, all documentary references of the period designating each of the three churches in succession as "Lynnhaven Church" or "Lynnhaven Parish Church," merely. There are also, of course, references to the individual churches as "the Old Church," "the New Church" or "the Brick Church," but these are distinguishing terms, only, and in no sense names. The first published use of the name "Donation," in connection with the existing church building, seems to have been as late as 1822, when the vestry ordered "the Church called the Donation Church in this Parish" to be put in repair, even the inventory of parish property by the new vestry of 1785 having referred to it simply as "the Mother Church." There is a strong and definite tradition, handed down by Bishop Meade, that the quaint and unusual name originated from the gift to the parish of adjoining lands, still known as Donation Farm, by a former rector, the Rev. Robert Dickson, at his death in 1776, for the endowment of a free school.²⁶

Although the vestry book specifies only the general dimensions of the eighteenth century structure that has come down to us as Old Donation Church, important details of its vanished interior woodwork may be gleaned from later vestry orders. These also reveal the congregation's

²⁶ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 249.

struggle for precedence in their fine new building, culminating in a vestry order dated 10th July, 1736, only two weeks after the church's completion, assigning the most desirable seats, "for preserving order and decency, peace and harmony in the new church." This order reveals that there were six "great pews" in the body of the church and one more on the north of the communion table; the assignment of of these pews shows that the men were placed, generally, on the north side and the women on the south.

One of the most interesting features of the old church's interior must have been the hanging pews or private galleries built for the family use of wealthy parishioners, at their own expense. These were especially authorized by the vestry and left lasting traces of their presence in the form of small ventilating windows of odd size and shape, high up in the side walls of the church. These little windows are a distinctive feature of Donation Church, not found in other surviving colonial church buildings in Virginia.

The first of these hanging pews was built by Capt. William Robinson, soon after completion of the building, and the second, thirty years later, by Capt. James Kempe. Both of these private galleries were on the north wall, and the heights of the ventilating openings indicate that the rear hanging pew extended above the last two church windows, adjoining the main gallery, while the front one was placed lower down, between the two middle windows. Access to both pews must have been by steps leading up from the main gallery and down from the rear pew to the front one. Corresponding small windows also exist in the south wall, formerly adjoining two similar private galleries built before 1769 by Mr. Walter Lyon and Mr. Thurmer Hoggard. A private "great pew" was built in 1767 by Col. Edward Hack Moseley, Jr., on the south side of the communion table. The pulpit, which was originally on the south side, was moved to a position directly opposite on the north side, to allow the chancel doorway to be shifted clear of the Moseley pew. The middle window in the east end was bricked up in order to make room for the altar piece.

These details have been incorporated in Plate 27, showing the probable interior arrangement of the original church. The word "ye", appearing in this and other plates in this volume, should properly have been rendered "the", since the initial letter is not really "y", but is merely a symbol widely used by colonial scribes to represent the letters "th", at the beginning or end of a word.

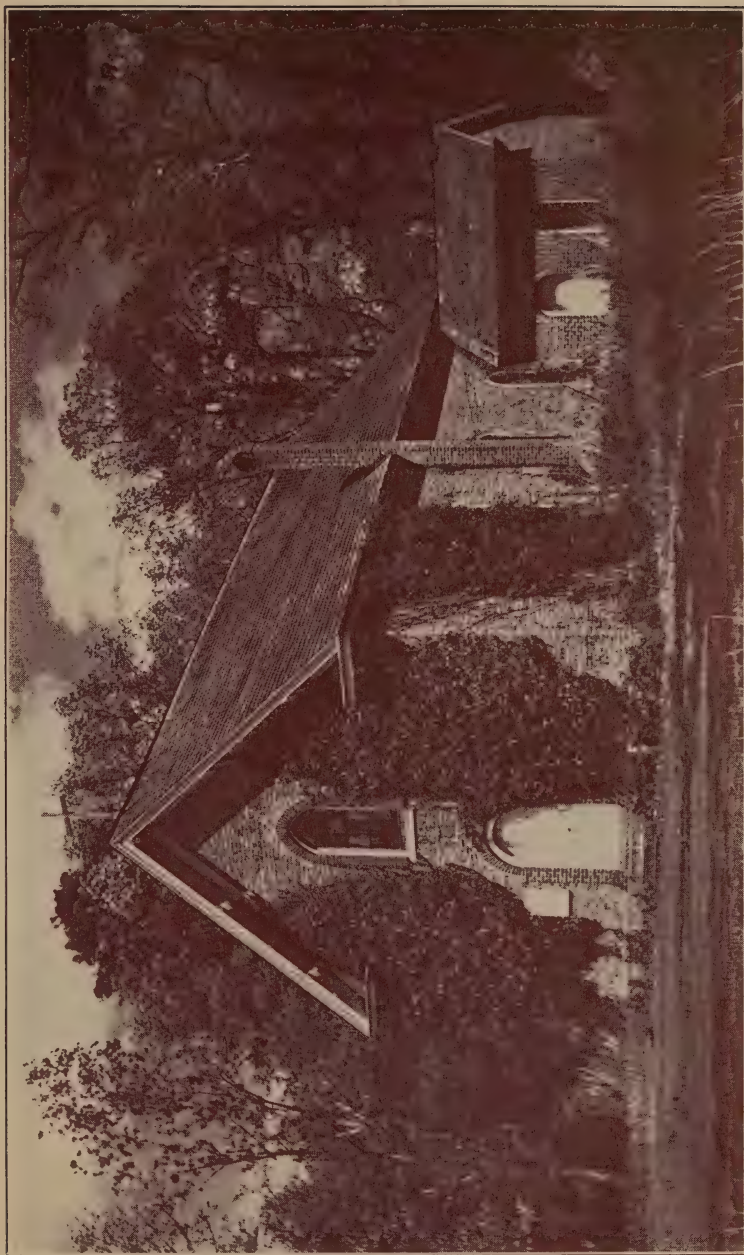


PLATE 29.

Eastern Shore Chapel.



A. Communion silver service of Old Donation Church, with flagon of 1716, paten of 1711, and cup of 1712. The paten was the gift of Maximilian Boush and bears his arms.



B. Communion silver service of the Eastern Shore Chapel, with date letter for 1759.

PLATE 30. Colonial communion silver of Lynnhaven Parish churches.

In colonial times, when counties were often of vast extent and the parish frequently included the whole county, as it did in Princess Anne, it was recognized as a hardship on the outlying settlers to require them to attend the parish church, for roads were bad and travel difficult. For their benefit, smaller local churches were built, known as "chapels of ease," at which services were held by the parish minister, whenever possible, and prayers and a sermon were read on Sunday by the clerk of the chapel, at other times. Lynnhaven parish was no exception to this rule and early records of both county and parish refer to chapels in various sections of the county remote from the parish church.

Perhaps the earliest of such references is found in a court order for Lower Norfolk County, dated 15th October, 1666, entering judgment by jury in "The Difference between Mr. Adam Thorowgood pl^t and Henry Snaile defend^t concⁿinge building a church." The charge was that Snaile had been so slow about erecting this frame chapel, on an unrecorded site, that some timber provided for its construction had become too rotten for use. The dilatory builder was ordered to "goe forward wth the worke hee hath begun . . . and make use of the timber . . . provided hee make good worke according to his agreem^t."²⁷

It is probable that this is the same chapel that is mentioned in another county record of this period, the will of William Handcocke of the Eastern Branch of Elizabeth River, dated 14th April, 1687, which reads: "Unto my eldest son, Simon Handcocke, [I leave] the plantation I now live on, being bounded with a small C^r [creek] the mouth of which runs in a little below the Chapell . . . Unto my sone Wm. Handcocke all the land that I have lying on the S^r Side of the above said small C^r being where the chapel now stands. Unto my sone Samuell Handcocke, a pa'll [parcel] of land lying on . . . Hoskins Cr. . . . and along . . . to the path that leads from my house to Linhaven Church."²⁸ A deed dated October, 1700, to the land adjoining this chapel describes it as the chapel for the Eastern Branch Precinct [of Lynnhaven Parish] and shows that it was still standing in that year.²⁹

This old Eastern Branch Chapel stood on the same site where, in the year 1697, there was established New Town, one of those transitory villages, typical of colonial times, which flourished for a while and

²⁷ *Lower Norfolk Antiquary*, V, 27.

²⁸ *Lower Norfolk County Wills*, V, fol. 23.

²⁹ *Lower Norfolk County Deeds*, I, Part 2, 292.

then passed away like a dream, leaving no trace behind except a few old bricks turned up by the plow. New Town's span of life was barely a century, but during this time it rose to the dignity of a port of entry, with a custom house and British garrison; here was located the third county court-house, from 1758 to 1778, and here the people of Norfolk took refuge when Dunmore shelled their town and burned it in 1776. The complete absence of further reference to this Eastern Branch Chapel, in county records and vestry book, indicates its probable disappearance soon after New Town village was established, or at least prior to the opening of the Lynnhaven Parish vestry book in 1723.

A land patent of 1649 to Richard Whitehurst, for 300 acres on the south side of the Eastern Branch of Elizabeth River, contains a boundary reference to "the Church Creek",³⁰ strongly suggesting the existence there of an early church building which cannot be identified with any known church of either Lynnhaven or Elizabeth River Parish. The existence of this church is well supported by the appointment in 1647 of a churchwarden for the Eastern Branch, in addition to those for Lynnhaven Parish, since the appointment of a churchwarden, from the very nature of his duties, presupposes the existence of a church building.

It seems possible that this ancient structure was the Southern Shore Parish Church and, since its site was included within the final bounds of Lynnhaven Parish, it would have been only natural for it to be continued in service as the first Eastern Branch Chapel of that parish. If so, it was replaced in 1666 by the chapel already described, whose site was nearly opposite Church Creek, on the other side of the Eastern Branch, judging from particulars in the 1649 land patent mentioning the former stream.

The old vestry book of Lynnhaven Parish opens in 1723 with the appointment of clerks for the brick church and two chapels. The brick church mentioned is manifestly the second Lynnhaven Church of 1692, near the ferry, but the identity of the chapels is not so obvious, although later entries refer to them as the upper and lower chapels. However, a vestry order of 15th September, 1724, countermanding an earlier levy for the repair of the Eastern Shore Chapel, gives us the name and location of one of these chapels as the first of three successive buildings known by the same name, although not on the same site. The identity of the other chapel mentioned in the vestry

³⁰ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 188.

book entry of 1723 is clearly established by an order of 7th July, 1725, for the repair of Machipongo Chapel, and there is ample evidence that this old chapel, later known as the Pungo Chapel, was the upper chapel of the vestry record and that the Eastern Shore Chapel was the lower one. It seems likely that the upper and lower chapels were so called from their respective locations in the upper and lower precincts of the Eastern Shore of Lynnhaven.

An early reference to the first Eastern Shore Chapel is found in the court order of 17th September, 1689, for the construction of a frame court-house "on Edward Coopers Land nigh the Chapell of Ease in the Eastern Shore of Linhaven".³¹ Repeated allusions to "the chapel" in boundaries given for lands near Linkhorn Bay, "on the eastern shore of Linhaven", in deeds made between 1698 and 1723,³² prove that this first Eastern Shore Chapel stood near the southern end of Great Neck, at the head of Wolfsnare Creek. These boundary references mention "the great branch that comes up to the chappell", "the main road leading from Wolfes Snare to the chappell and the eastern shore water mill". The compass bearings given for these boundaries identify "the great branch" as the north fork of Wolfsnare Creek and the roads as the existing highways adjacent to it.

This proves the first chapel and court-house to have stood about two miles due north of the existing Eastern Shore Chapel, on the west side of the same highway and in line with the head of the creek. It is significant that the fields at this point are full of fragments of old brick, which may represent the remains of the brick foundations under the frame chapel and court-house.

The second Eastern Shore Chapel stood on land patented by William Cornick in 1657, as a part of Salisbury Plains plantation, and the site was probably given to the parish by Cornick's son Joel, but no deed can be found covering the gift. We have definite evidence as to its date in a vestry order of 4th August, 1724, "that a good, Commodious Chapel be built on the Eastern Shore, fifty foot in Length, twenty five foot in breadth, framed work, weatherbored with inch pine plank, Lathed & Covered with good Cypress shingles." A subsequent order of 3rd November, 1726, placing the contract for this new frame chapel, shows that its actual construction was not undertaken until that date.

³¹ *Lower Norfolk County Deeds, 1686-95, XV, 146.*

³² *Princess Anne County Deeds, I, Part 2, 349, etc.*

The building of the third Eastern Shore Chapel, which still exists, on the site of the second one, is covered by a vestry order dated 1st October, 1753, as follows: "Resolved . . . That at or near Adjoining the place where the present Eastern Shore Chapel now stands is a fit and Convenient place to Erect a New Chapel & that the same be there Erected." The same order specified that the new chapel was to be a brick building "Fifty five foot long, Twenty five feet wide in the Clear . . . the walls . . . eighteen feet in height . . . two brick and a half thick from the foundation to the Water Table and two brick thick upward." There was to be "a convenient Large Gallery not to be Less than Eighteen feet in width, with three Windows on Each Side, two at the East End and one in the Gallery; the Windows to be of the same Dimentions with the Church Windows . . . of good crown glass 8 by 10 In., 6 lights by three beside the Arch; the Middle Isle to be five feet wide with four Wainscot pews two on the North and two on the South side . . . with a decent desk and pulpit, the Whole Church to be Compleatly painted where tis requisite of a Sky Colour; the Covering of the said Chappel to be of good heart Cypress Shingles and all the rest of the work to be finish in a Workmanlike manner after the moddel of the Church." It is apparent that the church specified as a "moddel" must have been the mother church, Old Donation, whose windows actually are "of the same Dimentions" as the chapel's.

In keeping with its character as a simple chapel of ease, the present Eastern Shore Chapel is built of common brick, laid in the usual colonial Flemish bond, but without glazed headers, and it is a foot longer than specified. Above the front doorway there is inset a square brick tile, inscribed with the initials of the builder, Joseph Mitchel, and the date 1754, while the vestry book records its acceptance on the 12th March of that year.

In connection with these dates, it must be remembered that the old-style dating of records, to suit a legal year ending on the 25th of March, had been abolished in 1752. It nevertheless seems certain that it was still followed in this case, and that the date 1754, in both tablet and vestry book, really signifies 1755, since the vestry-book entry for 12th March, 1754, follows the minutes of the vestry meeting for 11th October, 1754, instead of preceding it. Furthermore, it is not likely that any brick church, even if only a simple chapel of ease, would have been completed in six months.

The "convenient large Gallery" specified "not to be less than Eighteen feet" wide was actually limited to twelve feet by the position of the side windows, but was extended along the entire north side of the chapel, soon after its completion, with the "hanging pew" of Capt. William Keeling adjoining it on the south side.

Machipongo Chapel, the first Upper Chapel of the parish, was evidently a frame building without a brick foundation, since a parish levy of 1733 includes an item "for putting blocks under the uper Chapel". The only other known detail of its construction is given by a vestry order of 1729 that the churchwardens "New Cover the roof of matchipungo Chappell with boards or shingles as they shall think most proper", one of many references to the colonial use of overlapping planks for roof covering, in place of shingles.

The chapel's long Indian name was soon shortened to Pungo, with that of the surrounding region, for which it had been named. This old building may have been the unidentified chapel mentioned in a record of 1710, as discussed at the end of this chapter.

The replacement of the first Pungo Chapel by a new brick chapel was ordered on the 1st March, 1739, when the vestry agreed with Mr. James James "to build the aforesaid chappel for the sum of three hundred and twenty seven pounds ten shillings," and the contract seems to have been promptly carried out. This is shown by three successive annual levies, beginning in 1740, for a total of 57,000 pounds of tobacco to be paid "to the Church wardens towards building a Chappel at Pungo," with a final levy of 8,000 pounds for additional work by another contractor in 1743, which may therefore be taken as its date of completion.

That a new and more suitable site, some distance from the first Pungo Chapel, was chosen for its successor, seems clearly indicated by the above vestry order for the new chapel's construction: "Resolved that at William Dyer's is the most convenient place to build a new chappel," and it was also ordered that a committee of the vestry "do at some time in this month repair to the plantation of Wm. Dyer's to view and resolve on the place to put the new Chappel." Confirmation of its actual construction in the chosen location is given by later entries showing that, in 1744, William Dyer was paid two hundred seventy pounds of tobacco "for cleaning the Upper Chapel and sinking a well," and that, in succeeding years, he and his widow, after him, served as sextons of the Pungo Chapel. As in the case of the Eastern Shore Chapel, no deed for the site seems to be on record.

The construction order for this second Pungo Chapel shows that it was "Fifty foot long by Twenty five foot wide within the walls, which is to be of brick & fifteen foot height, covered with heart cypress shingles & a gallery of fifteen foot long; three large sash windows on the north side & two on the south side, two over the communion table, two small ones at the end where the gallery is, three large wainscot pews, two on the north side & one on the south side, the walls to be two & a half bricks thick from the foundation to the water table & two bricks thick from that to the top of the wall; & round the communion table to be neatly raild & banistred."

History repeats itself, and just as there were three successive Lynnhaven Parish Churches and three Eastern Shore Chapels, so we find it recorded that there were also three chapels at Pungo. As in the case of its predecessor, a new site in the same vicinity was chosen for the third Pungo Chapel, the order for which is dated the 17th June, 1772, and states that "the present Chapel at Pungo is at this time in a very ruinous state and condition and therefore vastly dangerous to Assemble & meet therein to offer up Prayers, &c. to Almighty God, for which the said chapel was erected and built."

The new chapel was ordered to be "Seventy five feet in length, Thirty feet in width from outside to outside. The Walls to be twenty feet to the square, and from the Foundation to the Water Table to be two bricks and a half thick and from the Water Table upwards to be two bricks thick" [later increased to two and a half]. "Two doors, one on the South side near the East end and the other in the West End, each Door to be Arched and eight feet to the Arch and 4 feet in Width. Five Windows on the North Side, Four ditto on the South Side, Arched and Glazed with best crown Glass . . . Three ditto in the East end . . . Two Arched Windows into a gallery at the West End . . . to be twenty five feet deep. To be Plaistered and Painted were necessary."

This brick chapel was completed in 1773 by the contractor, Hardress Waller, and is believed to have been the Pungo Chapel which survived the colonial era as the last building of that name. Its specifications reveal that it was much the largest of all the Lynnhaven colonial church buildings, being ten feet longer and five feet higher than the Donation Church. As in the case of the other parish church structures, its cost was met by four successive annual levies of tobacco, amounting to 90,000 pounds, as against 102,000 for the Donation Church, 69,000 for the present Eastern Shore Chapel, and 65,000 for the second Pungo

Chapel. At the same rate of exchange as given in the vestry book for the last-named Chapel, which cost in round figures £370, we find that the Donation Church cost about £580, the present Eastern Shore Chapel £385, and the last Pungo Chapel £510. In accordance with the usual custom, the sexton chosen for the new chapel was Anthony Fentress, upon whose land it was built, as shown by a levy of 18th October, 1773, which reads: "To Anthony Fentress for one Acre of Ground whereon to erect the New Chapel at Pungo." This third and last Pungo Chapel appears to have stood about two and a half miles south of the present Pungo village, on the east side of the Pungo Ridge Road and directly opposite the home of W. G. Eaton, part of which is believed to have been built by Anthony Fentress before 1772.³³

In two other outlying sections of the parish, Knott's Island and Blackwater, no chapels were built, but instead, reading-places were established, probably in private homes, where the clerk of the Pungo Chapel read the service of the church. This is clearly evidenced by the following order of vestry, dated 7th July, 1725: "Whereas Knots Island and blackwater presincts are very remote from the Chappell & Sermon being there but once in Six weeks, the inhabitants are often disappointed of hearing the word of God, and whereas Mr. Andrew Peacock, Clark of the said Chappel has for some time [for] the benefit and Instruction of the said Inhabitants read in each of the said pre-cincts on Certain times in an orderly Course which is approved by the vestry thereupon it's resolved that he continue to perform the same."

Of all the colonial churches and chapels of Lynnhaven Parish, only two survive, the Old Donation Church and the Eastern Shore Chapel, and their history and that of the vanished Pungo Chapel, since the close of the colonial era, may be briefly told. According to the vestry book, the parish had no regular minister from the outbreak of the Revolution until 1785, when the Protestant Episcopal Church of Virginia was incorporated in place of the disestablished Church of England. During this interval, the church and chapels were much neglected, and they were not put back into complete repair until 1822-1824. After this, the general decline of religion in Virginia left the parish, most of the time, again without a rector of its own.

A reorganization took place in 1842, under the Rev. John G. Hull, and a year later, the former Emmanuel Church was built at Kempsville as the fourth parish church of Lynnhaven. Following the new

³³ Kellam, *Old Houses in Princess Anne*, 155.

church's completion, Old Donation Church was "abandoned to beasts and bats," in the quaint words of Bishop Meade's informant, no further services being held there for almost three quarters of a century. After forty years of disuse, its decaying woodwork was completely burned out by a woods fire in 1882, and it became a roofless ruin, with large trees growing up within its broken walls.

Old Donation was repaired and replaced in service in 1916 as an Episcopal church, although its original position as the parish church was not regained. The old communion silver, with date letters of 1712, 1711, and 1716, for the cup, paten, and flagon, respectively, used at the Donation Church in colonial times, is in the keeping of its present vestry, and an ancient marble font and pewter alms basin, both said to be from the first Lynnhaven Parish Church, are also among its prized possessions. Since Emmanuel Church was completely destroyed by fire on 12th October, 1943, Old Donation has again become the mother church of Lynnhaven Parish, pending the building of a new church at Kempsville.

The present Eastern Shore Chapel seems to have been kept in regular service until shortly before the War Between the States, when it suffered the usual desecration by use as an army stable, and its interior was badly wrecked. The old chapel was put back into service in 1866, but in a "comfortless condition," to quote the vestry book, and in 1872, some necessary repairs were made. About 1886, its wrecked interior woodwork seems to have been replaced, mainly in the Gothic style of the period, but the existing pews are of simple bench type, with paneled ends, appropriate for a plain chapel of ease, and many of them appear old enough to be original with the building. Other original features may still be seen in the old gallery, whose wide-planked floor, heavy beams, and upper stair rail evidently survived the remodelling.

The Eastern Shore Chapel is still in active use as the parish church of East Lynnhaven Parish, and on special occasions, its beautiful colonial silver communion vessels are brought out for use. These bear the date letter of 1759, and according to tradition, were buried in a henhouse during the War Between the States, to save them from Federal raiders.

The old Pungo Chapel ceased to be used for services not long after its last repair in 1824, apparently, and was reported by Bishop Meade, in 1857, to be in very bad condition. It has long since disappeared, and even its site cannot be exactly determined, as the field in which it stood has gone back under cultivation.

The county records show that there were, in colonial Princess Anne County, at least three places of worship for dissenters from the Established Church. One of these was a Presbyterian meeting-house which was in use in 1693, and must have stood near the first Eastern Shore Chapel and court-house, since it was located, as they were, on Edward Cooper's plantation at Great Neck. The second dissenting place of worship was a private house on the Eastern Branch of Elizabeth River, reported as in use in 1699. Services in both cases were held by the Reverend Josias Mackie, a Presbyterian minister who had been dismissed as minister of Elizabeth River Parish, in 1692, because of his non-conformist practices.³⁴

The third dissenting house of worship was a Baptist meeting-house in the Pungo section of the county, whose site was sold to the church in 1764 by John Whitehead and wife, by a deed conveying "half an Acre . . . where the meeting house now Stands". This was part of a larger tract on the North River (now North Landing River) and it seems possible that the meeting-house stood at the place still known as the Baptizing Farm, on the east side of this stream and about two miles north of the Virginia-North Carolina state line.³⁵

Another early place of worship in this southeastern corner of Princess Anne County is as yet unidentified. It is mentioned in the little-known journal of the Virginia commissioners appointed to run the dividing line between Virginia and North Carolina in 1710. On the 26th May in that year, these commissioners, Philip Ludwell and Nathaniel Harrison, report that they rode over Pocaty Swamp bridge to the west side of North River, which they crossed at a point where it was a half mile wide. After spending the night at Burgess's, they rode "six miles to the Chappell, which was a very wretched one", and "passed by", five miles farther, to Captain Francis Moss's plantation, near the present Morse's (Moss's) Point. Their estimated distances are clearly exaggerated but, as they were on their way to meet the North Carolina commissioners at Knott's Island, this chapel is definitely located as having been on the peninsula between the present North Landing River and Back Bay.³⁶

Since this peninsula forms the lower end of Pungo Ridge, it seems altogether likely that this was the first Pungo Chapel of Lynnhaven

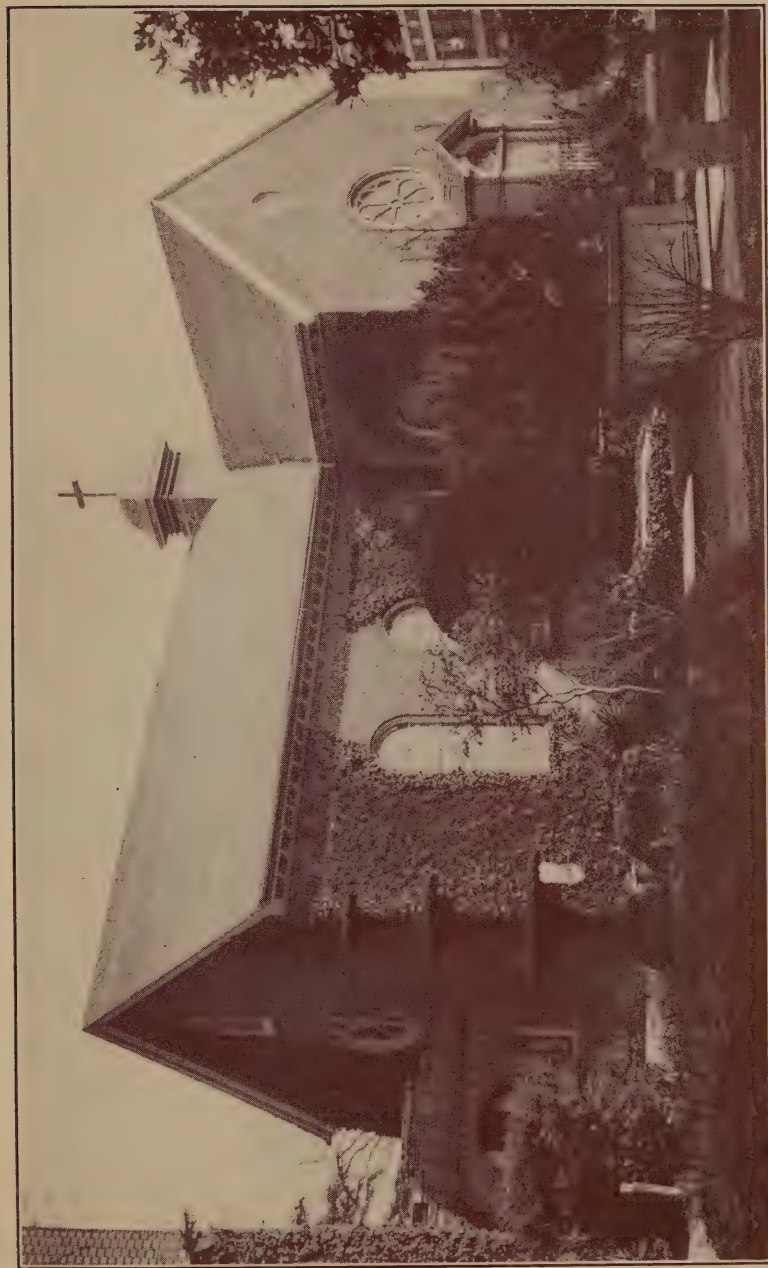
³⁴ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), II, 179.

³⁵ *Lower Norfolk Antiquary*, II, 113.

³⁶ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, V, 10.

Parish, and its erection in this remote section of the county at this early date may be traced to a historic endowment which was also responsible for the erection of early parish chapels in the counties of Nansemond and Isle of Wight. This endowment was in the form of 200 acres of land given by a pious philanthropist, Captain Hugh Campbell, in 1692, for the support of a reader in each of three places remote from church facilities, and the donor also purchased a Bible for each reader's use in holding services. These three places were Somerton in Nansemond County, Blackwater River in Isle of Wight and the North River in what had been Norfolk County and is now Princess Anne.³⁷

³⁷ *Lower Norfolk Antiquary*, I, 65.



St. Paul's Church, Norfolk, from City Hall Avenue.

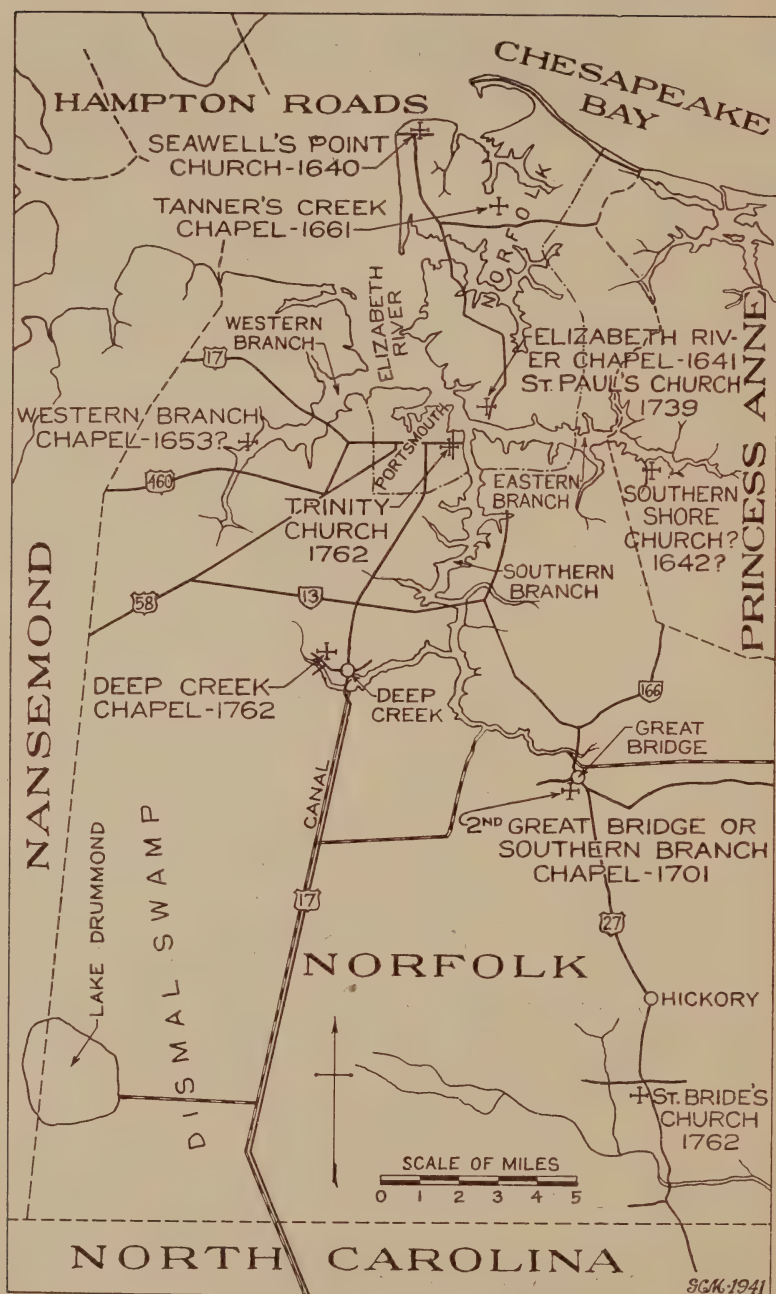


PLATE 32.

Map of Norfolk County.

CHAPTER VII.

Norfolk County Churches

THE COUNTY OF Norfolk, Virginia, with its colonial churches, had its origin in the early corporation and parish of Elizabeth City. Pioneer land grants within the present area of this county were made in 1620,¹ but general settlement did not take place until fifteen years later. The archives of Norfolk County are among the oldest surviving colonial records in Virginia, dating from the formation of the parent county of Lower Norfolk in 1637, and an eighteenth-century vestry book has been preserved for the county's principal parish.

The territory which now forms Norfolk County was originally included in Elizabeth City Corporation, one of the four "ancient boroughs" which, together with the Eastern Shore settlement, composed the colony of Virginia in 1618.² Upon the colony's division into eight shires in 1634, this area became part of Elizabeth City County, but was cut off in 1636 with the county of New Norfolk, the first to be created after the original division.

About a year later, the new county was in turn subdivided to form the counties of Lower Norfolk and Upper Norfolk. The lower county included all the territory south of Chesapeake Bay, east of Hampton Roads and on both shores of Elizabeth River, while the upper county extended from this stream's western headwaters to Isle of Wight County.³ Upper Norfolk eventually became Nansemond County,⁴ and the western part of Lower Norfolk became Norfolk County when Princess Anne County was cut off from it in 1691.⁵

New Norfolk County was evidently named for Norfolkshire in England. It is traditional that the name was assigned by a prominent early resident, Adam Thorowgood, who came from that shire. This tradition is discredited by modern research, which indicates that the county's name was derived from a princely grant of land, first made in 1636 and reissued in 1637 by King Charles I. to a favorite nobleman, Henry Howard, Lord Maltravers, which, although never taken

¹ *Lower Norfolk County Deeds, 1656-66, D, 348.*

² Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London*, III, 100.

³ Robinson, *Virginia Counties*, 198.

⁴ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 321.

⁵ *Ibid.*, III, 95.

up, included "such a competent tract of land . . . as may beare the name of a county and be called the County of Norfolk."⁶

No legislative enactments creating or dividing New Norfolk County have been found, but it is apparent that land grants and court records of 1637/8, for "the Lower County of New Norfolk" refer to territory which was at first regarded simply as the lower part of the county of New Norfolk, but which later came to be regarded as a separate county. This is borne out by other colonial records using such terms as "the Upper Parish of Elizabeth River"⁷ or the "Lower Parish of Elizabeth City"⁸ to denote the upper or lower part of a parish known to have been undivided at the time. It is also significant that the first enactment officially recognizing the existence of this separate county, an act of 1639/40 defining its bounds, shows a transition from the early name "Lower County of New Norfolk" to the later designation, "County of Lower Norfolk."⁹

This act of assembly, which bounded Lower Norfolk County in 1639/40, also set up a coterminous parish of the same name. This original parish soon became divided into Elizabeth River, Lynnhaven and Southern Shore Parishes. The last-named had ceased to exist by 1645, and Lynnhaven Parish was cut off with Princess Anne County in 1691. Elizabeth River Parish, after a final adjustment of boundaries in 1695, became coterminous with Norfolk County.¹⁰ It remained so until 1761, when Portsmouth Parish was formed from its territory west of Elizabeth River, and St. Bride's Parish from its territory south of the same river's eastern branch.¹¹

Southern Shore Parish is not mentioned by name in the Lower Norfolk county records, but its existence is proved by an act of March 1642/3, which defines the bounds of Lynnhaven Parish and provides "that they shall not be prejudiciall to the parishes of Eliz: River and southern shoare by taking away any part of the said parishes."¹² It appears that this third parish in Lower Norfolk County was named from its location on the southern shore of the Eastern Branch of Elizabeth River and it was probably of small area, extending only to the contemporary limits of settlement.

⁶ Neill, *Virginia Carolorum*, Appendix, 410.

⁷ *Lower Norfolk County Minute Book, 1637-46*, A, 251.

⁸ McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses, 1619-58*, xii.

⁹ Robinson, *Virginia Counties*, 198.

¹⁰ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, III, 128.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, VII, 416.

¹² *Ibid.*, I, 250.

The existence of a church in this locality is strongly suggested by a grant of 1649 to Richard Whitehurst for 300 acres of land, on the south side of the Eastern Branch of Elizabeth River and bounded easterly on the Church Creek.¹³ An earlier grant of 1637 locates this land five or six miles up the Eastern Branch,¹⁴ so that the Church Creek seems to have been the first stream east of Indian River. Since this creek's western bank is still marshy (as mentioned in the land grant) the church was probably on the eastern side of the stream. The fact that this early church cannot be identified with any known church building of the other two parishes in Lower Norfolk County tends to confirm the supposition that it was Southern Shore Parish Church.

Since the proviso already quoted from the Lynnhaven boundary act reveals the legislators' ignorance of the extent of Southern Shore Parish, it is not surprising that this church site fell within the bounds then set for Lynnhaven Parish, which extended to Indian River on the south side of the river. The continued existence of a church at this point is substantiated by an order of 27th April, 1647, appointing a churchwarden for the Eastern Branch, in addition to the two regularly elected for the parish of Lynnhaven, since the appointment of a churchwarden presupposes the existence of a church building.¹⁵

The inclusion of this church in Lynnhaven Parish is confirmed by a later order of the same year, for the listing of tithables, which shows that the Eastern Branch was then included within the parish bounds.¹⁶ Following this early church's absorption into Lynnhaven Parish, it seems probable that it became the first Eastern Branch Chapel of that parish, and was replaced in 1666 by a new frame chapel on a site almost directly across the Eastern Branch from Church Creek.¹⁷

Further support for the above hypothesis of the location of Southern Shore Parish is found in a record of 1640, showing that the Reverend Robert Powis had been receiving tithes from residents of the southern shore of the Eastern Branch, although the Reverend John Wilson had been minister of Elizabeth River, at the time, and was therefore entitled to all tithes from that parish.¹⁸ The records

¹³ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 188.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 57.

¹⁵ *Lower Norfolk County Wills, Deeds, 1646-50*, B, 36a.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, B, 40.

¹⁷ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2) ; XVIII, 279.

¹⁸ *Lower Norfolk County Minutes, 1637-46*, A, 39.

also reveal that Parson Powis obtained much of his support by the practice of law, but had become the minister of Lynnhaven parish by 1645.¹⁹ A county tax list of that year, giving the total number of tithables in Elizabeth River and Lynnhaven Parishes as exactly equal to the number in the entire county, proves that Southern Shore Parish had ceased to exist by that date,²⁰ perhaps because its rector and its church building had both become associated with the adjoining parish of Lynnhaven.

A vestry order of 1648 records that Parson Powis had officiated without pay in Elizabeth River Parish for the previous four years, but having then been inducted as minister for the entire county, was awarded a year's tithes retroactively, and a regular salary for the future.²¹ The wording of this record does not make it clear whether Mr. Powis was inducted at the beginning or end of his volunteer service, but it seems unlikely that an inducted minister would have served four years without the pay to which he was legally entitled. The fact that the vestry's provision for Mr. Powis' compensation was retroactive seems to show that it was prompted by his induction in 1648.

The employment of a first minister for what later became Elizabeth River Parish appears to have antedated the completion of a church building, for the county records contain an order dated 15th May, 1637, from Governor Harvey, requiring "John Wilson minister of Elizabeth River" to marry Thomas Hughs to Sarah Purflit, widow.²² Since the word "parish" is not used in this record, it seems probable that the name "Elizabeth River" refers to the section of the county in which Mr. Wilson officiated, and this conclusion is sustained by the fact that no parish of that name is mentioned in the county records until three years later.

Subsequent court orders provide for the collection of tithes due Mr. Wilson,²³ so that there can be no doubt that he was regularly employed as a minister and must have been required to hold services. That these services were being held in a private house, at the opening of the county records, is apparent from an order of 19th July, 1637, requiring Thomas Davis, for defamation of Anne Clark, to ask her

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, A, 312.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, A, 287.

²¹ *Lower Norfolk County Wills, Deeds, 1646-51*, B, 88.

²² *Lower Norfolk County Minutes, 1637-46*, A, 2.

²³ *Ibid.*, A, 41.



PLATE 33.

St. Paul's Church, Norfolk, from Church Street.



PLATE 34.

Trinity Church, Portsmouth, from High Street.

forgiveness "heere now in Court, and on the next ensuing Saboth at Capt John Sibsey's in the time of divine service,"²⁴ such penances being ordinarily imposed for performance during service at the parish church. Evidence that a similar situation obtained, at this period, in what later became Lynnhaven Parish, is found in the first entry of the Lower Norfolk records, an order of 15 May, 1637, imposing on Anne Fowler, for slandering Thomas Keeling, a similar penance, to be performed on the next Sabbath at the dwelling house of Captain Thorowgood.²⁵

The earliest record of services being held in a church building in what is now Norfolk County is found in an order of 18th May, 1638, and it is significant that the church involved is described as "the parish Church of the Lower Norf(olk)," indicating the continuance until that date of the parish named for the county and coterminous with it. This order reads: "Whereas it doth appeare that Richard Loe of Eli^z river plant^r hath most falsely . . . scandalized Anne Ruskinge . . . It is therefore ordered that the said Richard Loe shall . . . aske forgiveness the next Saboth at the parish Church of the Lower Norf and the next ensuing Saboth at the river and further that the sd Richard Loe shall pay for the building of a pair of stocks."²⁶

The construction of this first church for Lower Norfolk Parish appears to have been started in compliance with an order of council issued prior to the opening of the Lower Norfolk County records in 1637, but the church building was still incomplete in 1638. This is evident from a county court order dated 21st November in the latter year, which records that "Whereas their hath beene an order of Court granted by the Governor and Counsell for the Building and erecting of a church in the upper pct. [precinct] of this County with a reference to the Commander and Commissioner of the sd County for the apointing of a place fitting for the building thereof the said order being in part not accomplished, But standing now in election to be voyde and the worke to fall into ruine, Wee now the sd Commissioners . . . doe appoint Capt John Sibsey and Henery Seawell to procure workemen for the finishing of the same and what they shall agree for with the sd workemen to be levied by the apointment of us the Commissioners."²⁷

²⁴ *Ibid.*, A, fol. 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, A, fol. 1.

²⁶ *Lower Norfolk County Minutes, 1637-46*, A, 8.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, A, 10.

The location chosen for the first Lower Norfolk Parish Church is revealed in an agreement of 25th May, 1640, for the employment of a minister to succeed the Reverend John Wilson, whose death occurred in that year. This agreement reads: "Whereas the Inhabitants of this Parrishe being this day convented for the pvidinge of themselves an able minister to instructe them concerninge their soules health m^r Thomas Harrison tharto hath tendered his service to god and the said Inhabitants . . . w^{ch} his said tender is well liked of with the gen^{all} approbacon of the said Inhabitants, the pishoners of the Parrishe Church at m^r Sewell's Pointe who to testifie their zeale and willingness to pmote gods service doe hereby . . . pmise to pay one hundredth pounds starlinge yearely to the sd m^r Harrison, soe Longe as hee shall continue a minister to the said Parrishe."²⁸ Seawell's Point is the next point south of Willoughby Spit on the eastern side of Hampton Roads, and is still known by this name, after three centuries.

The geographical areas to which quotas for payment of this pledge are assigned in this agreement make it clear that the parish in question did not extend beyond the later bounds of Elizabeth River Parish. It seems probable, therefore, that this agreement represents the first official step toward the organization of the upper part of Lower Norfolk County into a parish of the above name. This interpretation is sustained by the appointment, only six weeks later, at a court held for the upper part of the county on 6th July, 1640, of the first recorded churchwardens for Elizabeth River Parish, evidently a new organization, since its name is left blank in the court order, and supplied later by a marginal note in the clerk's handwriting.²⁹ It is equally significant, as evidence that the division of the county into parishes took place at this time, that the first known churchwardens and vestry for Lynnhaven Parish were chosen at the ensuing court, for the lower part of the county, held on 3rd August of the same year.

The new church at Seawell's Point thus became the Elizabeth River Parish Church, but since it was located in the upper part of the county and remote from the more thickly settled region around Elizabeth River, the lower inhabitants promptly objected to supporting a minister for the exclusive benefit of the upper precinct of the parish. The difficulty was solved by an immediate agreement to build a chapel of ease on Elizabeth River, at the expense of the planters

²⁸ *Ibid.*, A, 35.

²⁹ *Lower Norfolk County Minutes, 1637-46*, A, 10.

there, at which chapel the minister should officiate as often as at the parish church.

This agreement was ratified by the same county court which ordered the minister's employment, on 25th May, 1640, and is recorded as follows: "Whereas there is a difference amongst the Inhabitants of thafforesaid Pishe, concerning the imployinge of a minister beinge now entertayned to live amongst them, The Inhabitants from Danyell Tanners Creeke and upwarde the three branches of Elizabeth river (in respect they are the greatest number of tithable persons) not thinkinge it fitt nor equall that they shall pay the greatest pte of one hundred pownds w^{ch} is by thaffore Sd order allotted for the ministers annuall stipend unlesse the Sd minister may teach and Instruct them as often as hee shall teach at ye pish church siytuate at m^r Sewells Pointe. It is therefore agreed amongst the Sd Inhabitants that the sd minister shall teach evie other Sunday amongst the Inhabitants of Ellizabeth River at the house of Robert Glascocke untill a convenyent Church be built and Erected there for gods Service w^{ch} is agreed to bee finished at the charge of the Inhabitants of Ellizabeth River befor the first day of May next ensuenge."³⁰

That slow progress was made toward the completion of the first Elizabeth River Parish Church at Seawell's point may be inferred from several depositions by its builders. The first of these, dated 6th July, 1640, by Thomas Bullock, states "that Edward lillie beinge att the howse of thee said Bullock beinge in discourse wth him about M^r Hayes & Concerninge the Church Edward Lillie said that M^r Hayes did Raile upon this depont & M^r Bourroughs & Will^m Davis and said that they were a company of Jackanapesses & had nothing but a littell Chimnie Corner Law amongst them & that m^r Hayes did psuade them to do theire worke slightly and an easier way."³¹

A clue to the probable date of completion of the church is given by a second deposition of the same date, in which Jacob Bradshaw "saith that Edward Lillie being att M^r Hayes Howse the said Hayes asked him why he did not gett forward the Church worke the sd Lillie answered that he could not goe forward for want of nayles & other Iorne worke the said Hayes furnished him presently with nayles and bid him hire Xpofer [Christopher] the Joyner to helpe him for a month and also the Said Hayes tould the said Lillie that he would come also and helpe him worke a fortnight & by that time

³⁰ *Ibid.*, A, 36.

³¹ *Lower Norfolk County Minutes, 1637-46, A, 41.*

they should have donnt and finished thee work & further Saith not."³² Since these two depositions are dated only six weeks after the order for a chapel of ease on Elizabeth River, for whose construction eleven months had been allowed, they cannot refer to its completion but must be associated with that of the parish church.

This conclusion is consistent with the fact that the levy authorized by the original order of November, 1638, to cover the cost of finishing the church, was not made until 15th March 1640/41, which suggests that the work had then been completed. In this levy, which also provides for the salary of the minister employed in the previous May, "It is ordred By this Court that every workeing hand or tithable psone begininge at Peeter Porter's and so alonge to Capt Willoughby for the ministers duties shall pay tenn shillings sterling p poll w^{ch} was by former agreement and it is ffurther ordred that the said Inhabitants shall sattisfie and pay 24 l of tobb p poll . . . and one Bushel of Corne p poll for & towards the new repairinge and ffinishinge of the Church."³³ It is apparent that this order relates to the renewal and completion of the unfinished and partly ruinous parish church building mentioned in the original entry of 21st November, 1638. The same levy also authorizes the receipt of one hundred pounds of tobacco from Cornelius Lloyd and Robert Speake, which they "gave freely as a guift toward the said Church."

There is no record of the size and type of construction of this first Elizabeth River Parish Church, but the difficulty experienced in finishing the building suggests that it was built of brick. Such a conclusion is supported by a record of 15th March, 1640/1, showing that building brick then had to be transported by boat from Kecoughtan, and that Edward Hayes, who seems to have furnished material for the church's completion, had been unable to supply Bullock, the builder, with "a thousand of brick," because of the death of the brickmaker.³⁴ The site of this pioneer church building now lies within the present United States Naval Operating Base and somewhere near its main entrance, although its exact location has been lost as a result of modern construction on the government reservation.

This first church appears to have gone out of service before the close of the seventeenth century. It seems possible that it was superseded as the parish church by the chapel of ease on Elizabeth River,

³² *Ibid.*, A, 41.

³³ *Ibid.*, A, 71.

³⁴ *Lower Norfolk County Minutes, 1637-46*, A, 72.

as early as 1655, when a county court order, dated 16th July in that year, appointed "Uppon the land of M^r Will^m Shipp on Elizabeth River, to be the place for both Church and Markett for Elizabeth River parish, two Myles in length Northward & Southward & no further."³⁵ The market place assigned for Lynnhaven Parish, by the same act, included the existing church of that parish, and the presence of the chapel of ease may well have influenced the choice of a similar site for Elizabeth River Parish.

Since no original land grants to William Shipp have been preserved, it is difficult to locate his plantation with exactness, but he was in the county in 1638 as the proprietor of a tavern or ordinary. The records show that many of the earliest county courts were held at Shipp's ordinary, and in 1646 they were ordered to be held nowhere else.³⁶ A clue to the location of Shipp's lands is given by a deposition of 1654, establishing the fact that a land patent had been assigned to Shipp by Robert Glascocke, before "going on a march from which he did not return again."³⁷

The patent assigned was probably Glascocke's "grand patent," dated 6th March, 1637, for "200 acres on the south side of Elizabeth River, bounded northerly on Lieutenant John Cheeseman's".³⁸ Land office records show that Cheeseman's land was bounded on the north by Captain John Sibsey's land, known to have adjoined Captain William Tucker's plantation³⁹ of 650 acres, which a deed of 1661 states was patented in 1620 and included Seawell's Point.⁴⁰ Although the reason for Shipp's purchase of Glascocke's house and lands can only be conjectured, it seems probable that it was because the land adjoined the buyer's own property, and his tavern-keeping business had increased until he could no longer find room for his family at his crowded ordinary. It also seems plausible that Glascocke sold out so that he might settle on his later grant of fifty acres, situated on the Western Branch.⁴¹

A further clue to Shipp's location is found in the earliest deed in the Lower Norfolk County records, dated 6th February, 1639, which states that Shipp had offered the land in question to Captain Thomas

³⁵ *Lower Norfolk Antiquary*, III, 33.

³⁶ *Lower Norfolk County Minutes*, 1637-46, A, 344.

³⁷ *Lower Norfolk County Wills, Deeds*, 1651-56, C, Dec. 28, 1654.

³⁸ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 32.

³⁹ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 7.

⁴⁰ *Lower Norfolk County Deeds*, 1656-68, D, 348.

⁴¹ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 111.

Willoughby, original owner of the site of Norfolk.⁴² This suggests that Shipp's land adjoined that of Willoughby, to whom it would therefore be natural for Shipp to offer this land before selling it to others. If the above assumptions are correct, we have a continuous chain of land-holdings extending from Seawell's Point to the site of Norfolk. Since the grants north of Shipp's land, although few in number, included over two square miles of land, mostly choice waterfront, this places Shipp near enough to the Norfolk end of the chain so that the "two myles northward and southward," specified for the market, would have been ample in extent to include a chapel site in what is now the city of Norfolk.

The new chapel building at Elizabeth River apparently was completed by the 1st May, 1641, as provided in the original agreement for its construction. This is indicated by the following order, dated on the second day of that month, defining the new structure's status as that of a chapel of ease, rather than a parish church: "Whereas there was an order of Court granted by the Gov^r and Counsell & directed to the Commder of this County that there pishe Church should be erected & built at Mr Seawell's poynt at the Cost & charges of the Inhabitants and was also agreed on by the said Inhabitants that a Chappell of Ease should be built in Elizabeth River at the Charges of pticular famalies Sittuated in the Aforesaid River by Reason of the Remote Plantations from the aforesaid pishe Church. It is therefore ordred that at noe time after the date hearof there shall be any Vestry chossen nor helld at the aforesaid Chappell but that the said Chappell shall be accompted a Chapell of ease but no pishe Church and that the Vestry shall ever heereafter be chossen & held at the aforesaid pishe Church: provided that there priviledge in the ministracon be a like and the Charges in the ministracon every other Sunday unto the aforesaid pishe Church be equally Levied upon every tithable pson & inhabitante in this the aforesaid pishe."⁴³ Further evidence of the completion of the chapel of ease is found in an order of 6th September, 1641, showing that a penance imposed on Edy Tooker by a court held 12th April in the same year, and required to be performed in the parish church,⁴⁴ was actually carried out in the chapel of ease at some time between the dates of the two orders.⁴⁵

⁴² *Lower Norfolk County Minutes, 1637-46, A, 12.*

⁴³ *Lower Norfolk County Minutes, 1637-46, A, 79.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid., A, 76.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid., A, 93.*

Nothing is known as to the dimensions and very little can be said of the material of the chapel at Elizabeth River, but study of the few available records suggests that it was constructed of wood. This chapel, which finally attained the dignity of a parish church, stood in the southeast corner of the present St. Paul's Churchyard, Norfolk, at what is now the intersection of Church Street and City Hall Avenue, formerly known as Cove Street. The deed for the original town of Norfolk shows that the northern boundary of the fifty-acre site purchased for the town site in 1682 was offset and extended so as to include the old chapel of ease and its churchyard. The town site occupied part of a tract of land first granted to Captain Thomas Willoughby in 1636.

The chapel's location was well chosen for ready access by water, the principal means of transportation at that period, since it lay between the heads of the Town Back Creek and the marshy cove called Dun-in-the-Mire, which were only a quarter mile apart, while it was an equal distance inland from the main river. Maps of the original town show that the highway past the church was at that time the only entrance to Norfolk by land, and it continued to be called merely "the Road leading out of Town" until nearly a century after the chapel was built. When Norfolk was incorporated as a borough in 1737 and its limits were considerably extended, this road was renamed Church Street from its association with the old church.

Soon after the incorporation of Norfolk, whose growth had been rapid since its foundation in 1680, a new building was erected in 1739 as the parish church, adjoining the old church, originally the chapel of ease of 1641, which was then abandoned. The only surviving colonial vestry book of Elizabeth River Parish, which opens in October, 1749, and extends until April, 1761, records that on the 9th October, 1750, it was "Ordered that Ja^s Pasteur do have the Bricks & Timber of the Old Church to build an House on the School Land." It appears that this privilege was not exercised by Mr. Pasteur, since it was offered, exactly ten years later, to Joseph Mitchell, who was given the "Bricks & ca [etcetera] of the Old Church, on condition that he clears the Church Yard of All the Rubish," and this probably represents the final disappearance of the old chapel's ruins. Mitchell was the builder of the existing Eastern Shore Chapel of Lynnhaven Parish in 1755 and, five years earlier, had constructed on the glebe land of Elizabeth River Parish a wooden poor house that burned soon afterward.

It seems probable that the bricks involved in both vestry orders formed the foundation of a frame building, the emphasis placed upon them in the second order being attributable to the valueless condition of the woodwork after twenty years' abandonment. This interpretation is corroborated by the original agreement to build the chapel of ease, which ordered its completion in about eleven months, a period inadequate for erection of a brick building at that early period.

The new parish church built in 1739 is the building now known as St. Paul's Church, Norfolk. It is a brick structure in the form of a Latin cross, with the chancel and transept wings of nearly equal length and the nave considerably longer. The outside dimensions are eighty-six feet six inches, from east to west, by sixty-three feet six inches, from north to south. The main body of the church is thirty-three feet wide and the transept twenty-six feet three inches wide, outside; the chancel wing projects eighteen feet six inches and each transept three feet three inches less, while the nave is forty-two feet long. From ground level to plate, the side walls are twenty-two feet high, and they are three brick lengths, or nearly thirty inches, thick. The pattern of the Flemish-bond brickwork is set off by the customary glazed headers and extends down to the water table, below which the foundation walls are laid in English bond.

It is traditional that, in 1733, Samuel Boush, first mayor of the borough of Norfolk, donated the site for the erection of the new church, but this cannot be substantiated by any deed or will of record for Norfolk County. There is also a tradition that he furnished the bricks for the church's construction, but this is equally incapable of proof. Whatever the truth of these legends, some distinguished service in connection with the new church appears to be commemorated by the presence of the initials of Samuel Boush and the date of the building's completion, 1739, set in the brickwork of its south transept gable. The initials and date are worked in projecting glazed brick headers, now painted red, at the sides of the existing rose window.

Like most cross-shaped colonial churches, the existing St. Paul's Church has a principal entrance at the west end of the nave, and a secondary entrance at each end of the transept. There are three windows in each side of the nave, one in each side of the three wings forming chancel and transept, and two in the east end wall of the church. It seems probable that the entrance doorways originally had

special brick trim of the classic pedimented design typical of the period of construction, but the earliest pictures of the church, all made in the nineteenth century, show porticoes similar to those added at the latest restoration. Later pictures show that, at an intermediate period, these porticoes had semi-circular tops.

Some details of the original interior arrangement of the present St. Paul's Church are given in the vestry order of 9th October, 1750, that "Cap^t John Cook, Cap^t John Phripp, Cap^t Max: Calvert & M^r Cha^s Sweny shall have leave . . . to build a Gallery in the Church in Norfolk town reaching from the Gallery of M^r John Taylor Dec^d to the School Boys Gallery" and that "M^r Matt: Godfrey, M^r Will^m Nash, Cap^t Trimagan Tatum, & M^r Will^m Ashley shall have leave . . . to build a Gallery in the Church in Norfolk Town reaching from the Pulpitt to the School Boys Gallery."

These two galleries were evidently on opposite sides of the nave, and the school-boy's gallery must have been the original gallery regularly built in the west end of a colonial church. On this basis, the pulpit was located at one of the two re-entrant corners formed by the intersection of the west wall of the transept with the side walls of the nave, and the earlier private gallery mentioned undoubtedly occupied the transept wing opposite the pulpit. There must also have been a gallery in the other transept wing, otherwise one would have been built there in preference to the less convenient galleries at the side of the nave. It is evident that all these galleries were required to provide the additional seating capacity demanded by the rapid growth of the town after its incorporation.

Since the earliest nineteenth-century pictures of the church show large circular windows in the transept gables, it seems probable that the existing rose windows in these gables replaced colonial windows of the same shape and size, which probably were original, since the initials and date on the south gable are divided and spaced to clear a window of that shape and size. The small circular window openings, high up in the gables of the chancel and transept wings, appear to be original with the church, and the small sash window in the west gable of the nave, shown in early views of the church, doubtless was provided in the construction plans of the building to give light and air to "the Schoolboys' gallery." The present rose window above the west doorway is therefore a modern addition, supplementing the original sash window mentioned, which appears to have been moved upward to make room for it.

The parish church of 1739 was traditionally called "the Borough Church," although this name does not seem to occur in the county records. The church was struck by a British cannonball during the bombardment of Norfolk by Lord Dunmore's fleet in January, 1776. Shortly afterward, the entire town was burned by the American forces, with or without orders from the Virginia convention, and the old church's roof and interior woodwork were completely destroyed. Its massive walls survived the fire, as in the case of several other colonial churches, but stood a ruin for nine years before the church was rebuilt with the original walls and replaced in service about 1785. The expense of rebuilding was met through the passage of an act of assembly, in that year, authorizing a lottery to raise not more than £700 for this purpose.⁴⁶

Nearly three quarters of a century after the bombardment, the cannonball which had struck the church was found buried in the ground beneath the indentation it had made in the brickwork, where it was later cemented in place. This historic relic is now marked by a tablet placed beneath it, and can still be seen high up in the south wall of the chancel wing, near its eastern corner.

At the close of the eighteenth century, an unfortunate struggle for possession of the old church arose in its congregation, during which it was used jointly by two factions, each with its own minister and vestry. In 1798, the larger and more influential part of the parishioners withdrew, and after holding services in the county courthouse for two years, built a church of their own on the opposite side of Church Street from the old church. It was given the name of Christ Church and was governed by a board of trustees, the minister being the Reverend Mr. James Whitehead.

The use of the old church by the remnant of its congregation continued only five years after the separation, until the death of its minister, the Reverend Mr. William Bland, in 1803. The deserted building was utilized for services by the Baptists until 1816, when they moved into a new church building, leaving the old Mother Church to the colored Baptists. After the burning of the first Christ Church in 1827, its congregation reoccupied the former parish church until the completion of their new edifice, and then used the old structure as a Sunday school.

In the year 1831, upon the initiative of the rector of Christ Church, the Reverend Henry W. Ducachet, an independent Episcopal congre-

⁴⁶ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, XII, 228.

gation was formed and a new vestry elected, by whom the ancient Borough Church was repaired and restored to service. It was consecrated by Bishop Moore in 1832 as St. Paul's Church and its vestry was recognized by the Convention of that year. Except for two years during the Civil War, when the building was taken over by the Federal provost-marshal, for religious services by an army chaplain, St. Paul's Church has been in continuous use by its own congregation since its consecration in 1832.

The church, as originally built in 1739, had no tower but, in 1834, a small belfry was erected above the western end of the nave, in the conventional location for a colonial church steeple. This belfry was a short square tower, with a slatted window in each side and a small spire at each corner of its roof. A woodcut of St. Paul's Church, published in 1857 as an illustration for Bishop Meade's great work on the colonial churches of Virginia, appears to indicate that the site of the present vestry room, in the angle between the chancel and the north transept wing, was then occupied by a square tower with castellated top, replacing the earlier belfry of 1834. This is confirmed by the historian William S. Forrest, who writes, in 1853, that "A new square belfry has also been erected in the northeastern angle [of the church]".⁴⁷ This tower seems to have been taken down at an unrecorded date and replaced, later on, by the existing vestry room. The present Norman tower, connected by an arcade to the western end of the church, was erected in 1901.

About fifteen years after the old church's restoration to service as St. Paul's Church, its interior was rearranged and finished in the Gothic style of the period. The entire building was beautifully and appropriately restored in 1913, following colonial precedent and usage rather than the unknown original arrangement of the interior. Surrounding the old church is an ample churchyard of outstanding beauty and historical interest. There appears to be no reason to doubt that this has been used as a burial ground ever since the construction of the first church on this site, three centuries ago, although only one gravestone of the seventeenth century is still in place, and this one, dated 1673, cannot be proved to represent a burial in this churchyard.

The colonial vestry book of Elizabeth River Parish, which opens in 1749, records the existence of a Mother Church and three chapels of ease. The Mother Church is the present St. Paul's Church, Norfolk,

⁴⁷ Forrest, *Historical Sketches of Norfolk*, 62.

and the three other houses of worship mentioned were the Tanner's Creek, Western Branch and Southern Branch Chapels, the last being also called the Great Bridge Chapel in the vestry book.

A court record dated 1649, just a century earlier, requiring a minister of this parish, Rev. Sampson Calvert, to do penance for immorality by confessing his sin to the congregations "at the parish Church" and "at the Chappell", proves that only one chapel was then in service in the parish, as otherwise the building mentioned in the order quoted would have had to be identified by name.⁴⁸ It is apparent that the church and chapel of 1649 were the ones respectively situated at Seawell's Point and the present site of Norfolk, and that the three chapels of 1749 therefore originated during the last half of the seventeenth century or later.

A county court order of 17th October, 1659, appointing a jury "to view the frame and other works done by John Williams towards the building of a Church in Daniell Tanner's Creek and place a valuation upon them," sets the date at which construction of the Tanner's Creek Chapel was begun, and shows that it was a wooden building.⁴⁹ An order dated 15th April, 1661, authorizing four hundred pounds of tobacco and cask to be paid to John Williams "for worke done towards the buylding of a Church in Daniell Tanner's Creeke" indicates that the chapel was completed in that year. Since this order authorized the churchwarden to pay this sum out of "the fiteene pounds of tob^o Levied formerly by act,"⁵⁰ it seems probable that the new chapel was erected in accordance with the act of assembly of 1655/6, ordering the laying out of parishes. This act authorized an annual levy of the above amount, per tithable, in every parish vacant of a minister, the sum collected to be expended on the construction of a church for the parish. According to the vestry book, the minister of Elizabeth River Parish received additional pay, equal to one fourth of his regular salary, for preaching at Tanner's Creek Chapel, although no extra compensation was given him for officiating at his other two chapels.

The site of the Tanner's Creek Chapel now lies within the apex of the angle formed by the Virginian Railroad and the spur track to the former Army Base, about a mile and a half north of Tanner's Creek. The chapel's brick foundation survived until the close of the last century, and is described by Mr. Minton W. Talbot, owner of the site,

⁴⁸ *Norfolk County Wills, Deeds*, 1646-51, B, 129.

⁴⁹ *Lower Norfolk County Wills, Deeds*, 1656-66, D, 228.

⁵⁰ *Lower Norfolk Antiquary*, III, 105.

as that of a building about thirty by forty feet in size. Upon cultivation of the site, the bricks were removed and the ground filled in and graded, so that no trace of the foundation is now visible.

After the disestablishment of the Church of England in 1785, Tanner's Creek Chapel appears to have been abandoned. After many years of neglect, the old building was repaired and restored to service by a new Baptist congregation which was soon formally constituted as Tanner's Creek Church. In 1836, this name was changed to Salem Church and it seems probable that a new church building was then erected on the site of the later church of that name, which stood just northeast of Tanner's Creek crossroads, at the intersection of the old Ocean View Road with the Seawell's Point Road. This building of 1836, having fallen into ruin by 1870, was rebuilt on the same site, but even this later building has now disappeared. The ruins of the first Salem Church were erroneously identified as those of Tanner's Creek Chapel by Dr. N. A. Okeson, former rector of St. Paul's Church, Norfolk, in an address made in 1877. The mistake seems to have been occasioned by this Baptist congregation's having originally occupied the ancient chapel and then constituted their church under its name.

A clue to the date of construction of the second chapel of ease mentioned above is given by a land grant of 16th April, 1653, for 150 acres, "between the two branches of Church Creek," to Richard Pinner,⁵¹ whose other lands lay on the Western Branch of Elizabeth River, which suggests the existence of a church building in this location at that early period. The Western Branch Chapel mentioned in the vestry book, which may have been the original building or have succeeded it on the same site, stood on the north side of the Western Branch, near the colonial ferry to what is now Port Norfolk, where the stream is now crossed by the present Atlantic Coast Line Railway bridge. Upon the division of Elizabeth River Parish in 1761, this building became a chapel of ease of Portsmouth Parish and seems to have disappeared early in the nineteenth century. Its churchyard was crossed by the railroad's right of way, and the bricks of its foundation were dug up and used to build a small wharf at this point, during the bridge's construction.

Similar evidence of the early existence of a chapel in the southern part of Elizabeth River Parish is found in a land grant dated 6th September, 1664, to William Carver for 890 acres in Lower Norfolk County on the Southern Branch of Elizabeth River, near the Church

⁵¹ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 258.

Creek.⁵² This chapel appears to have been the one whose destruction was reported to the House of Burgesses on the 30th of August, 1701, in "a Grievance from Norfolk County complaining that a Chappell of Ease formerly built by the Inhabitants of the Southerne Branch Precinct of the said County is pulled down and rebuilt in an inconvenient place for about three fourth of the people in the Said precinct". The same record describes the old chapel as having been "built at the proper Costs and charge of the Inhabitants" of the precinct.

In taking action upon this grievance, the House condemned as "Arbitrary and illegall" the vestry's action in pulling down this chapel and "building a new one in another place farr Distant without the Consent of the said Inhabitants", as well as their attempt to assess the whole charge of building a new chapel upon the precinct, when the cost of maintaining the mother church was levied upon the entire parish. The election of a new vestry was therefore authorized.⁵³

The new chapel erected in 1701 was evidently the same building as the Southern Branch Chapel of the vestry book, which was built at Great Bridge and is also mentioned in the parish records as "the Bridge Chapel" or "Great Bridge Chapel." This early church stood on the "Great Road" to Carolina, now State Route 27, at the southwest corner of its present junction with the New Mill Creek Road, now State Route 640.⁵⁴

The second Southern Branch Chapel appears to have been a frame building, and the vestry book shows that it was enlarged in 1750 by the addition of a wing. The old building became a chapel of ease of St. Bride's Parish in 1761, and in December, 1775, played a prominent part in the battle of Great Bridge, the second engagement of the Revolutionary War in Virginia, when it was occupied as a fort by the American forces. The chapel fell into disuse after the war and was torn down about 1845.

Following the creation of St. Bride's and Portsmouth Parishes in 1761, the vestry of each of the new organizations seems to have ordered the immediate construction of a parish church of brick. The new church of Portsmouth Parish was built at the corner of Court and High Streets, in the city of Portsmouth. It was completed about 1764, according to an article in the Virginia Gazette for 11th December, 1766, in which the writer praises the newly-elected mayor of Ports-

⁵² *Ibid.*, I, 478.

⁵³ McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses, 1695-1702*, 275.

⁵⁴ Steward, *History of Norfolk County*, 218.

mouth and continues: "I wish I could say as much for the Gentlemen of the Vestry of that parish. A church there, built within these three years, is now ready to tumble down! which has obliged the Church-Wardens to advertise it for repairs. I hope none of the Vestry were concerned with the undertaker that built the church".

A French traveller, M. Moreau de Saint Mery, visiting Portsmouth in 1794, described this church as "a brick building that is neat and well kept," having "on its interior . . . a rood screen and an array of benches. At each side near the entrance, are two benches painted black, to indicate that they are reserved for Negroes, who must not mingle with the white people."⁵⁵ This seems to be the only record of the occurrence of a rood screen, dividing the chancel from the nave, in an eighteenth century Virginia colonial church, and suggests that this feature was of more common occurrence than has been believed. The benches, described above, must have been single or "common pews," without doors, sometimes fitted in colonial churches instead of the more usual double or "great pews" with high paneled partitions and doors.

Portsmouth Parish Church, although not abandoned after the Revolution, like many other colonial church edifices, was without a rector from 1809 until 1821. Regular services were then resumed, to keep the old building from being taken over by a Presbyterian congregation, who had been using it for occasional meetings. In 1829, the church was rebuilt and enlarged, retaining the original north wall and both end foundations. A marble tablet recording the remodelling was inset over the doorway of the reconstructed church and is still preserved in the front wall of the present steeple.

Since the church building as rebuilt in 1829, which forms the nave of the existing Trinity Church, was not of the usual proportions for a colonial church, whose length was regularly twice its breadth, it seems probable that the old parish church was widened to make room for a new entrance doorway between the original east end windows. The colonial entrance was, as always, at the west end of the building, and the interior arrangement of the church was turned around, during reconstruction, so as to give more convenient access from Court Street. The rebuilding was completed by the addition of a steeple, above the new east doorway, and a vestry room opening off the new chancel at the west end of the church. To hide the extensive alterations in its brickwork, the remodelled colonial building was given a coat of stucco.

⁵⁵ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XLVIII, 260.

This steeple was removed and the church still further enlarged in 1854, the present form of the building having been attained in 1900, with the erection of the existing tower. Since most of the colonial churches restored to service at this period were renamed for saints or religious concepts, it seems probable that the name Trinity Church was first given to the old Portsmouth Parish Church shortly before its consecration in 1829, the earliest recorded use of the name being in a report by its rector, dated 1825.

A chapel of ease for Portsmouth Parish was built near Deep Creek, soon after 1761, which seems to have been in use until after the Revolutionary War and then abandoned. This Deep Creek Chapel stood about a mile west of the present Deep Creek village, on the north side of the creek. Its site is on the east side of the highway to Bowers Hill, near its intersection with the modern road across the head of the creek. This chapel was a frame building and seems to have been set on brick piers. It survived until late in the last century, since it was still standing, within the memory of the oldest local residents.

The new brick parish church built for St. Bride's Parish in 1762 stood four miles north of the Virginia-North Carolina state line, on the west side of the colonial "Great Road" from Norfolk to Elizabeth City, now State Route 27, and just south of its intersection with what is still known at St. Bride's Road, or the Brick Church Road, from its association with this old building. The church has long since disappeared, but there are distinct traces of its foundation in a field at this spot. The dates inscribed upon two post-colonial tombstones reveal that the old churchyard was used for burials as late as 1822.

The only other church in St. Bride's Parish appears to have been the Great Bridge Chapel, already described, which was located eight miles further north on the same highway, and undoubtedly served as the parish church, until the completion of the new brick building.

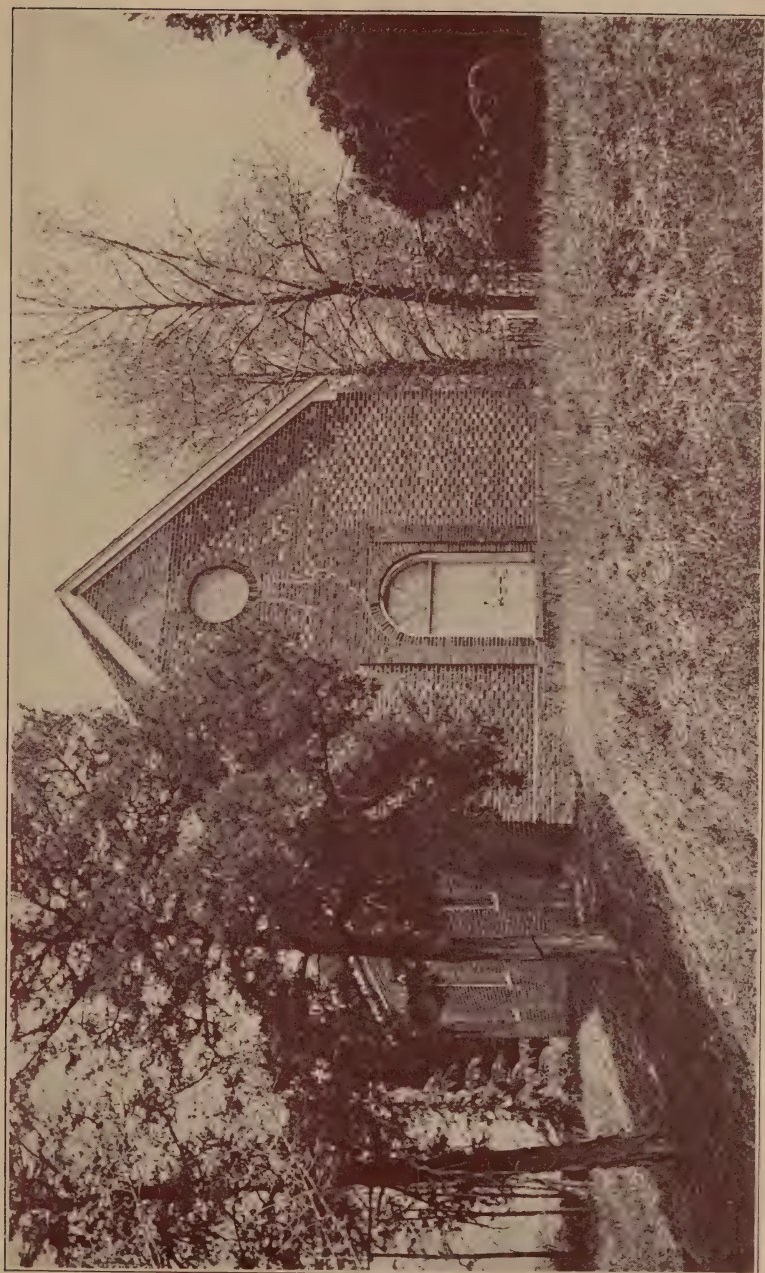


PLATE 35.

Chuckatuck Church (St. John's Church).

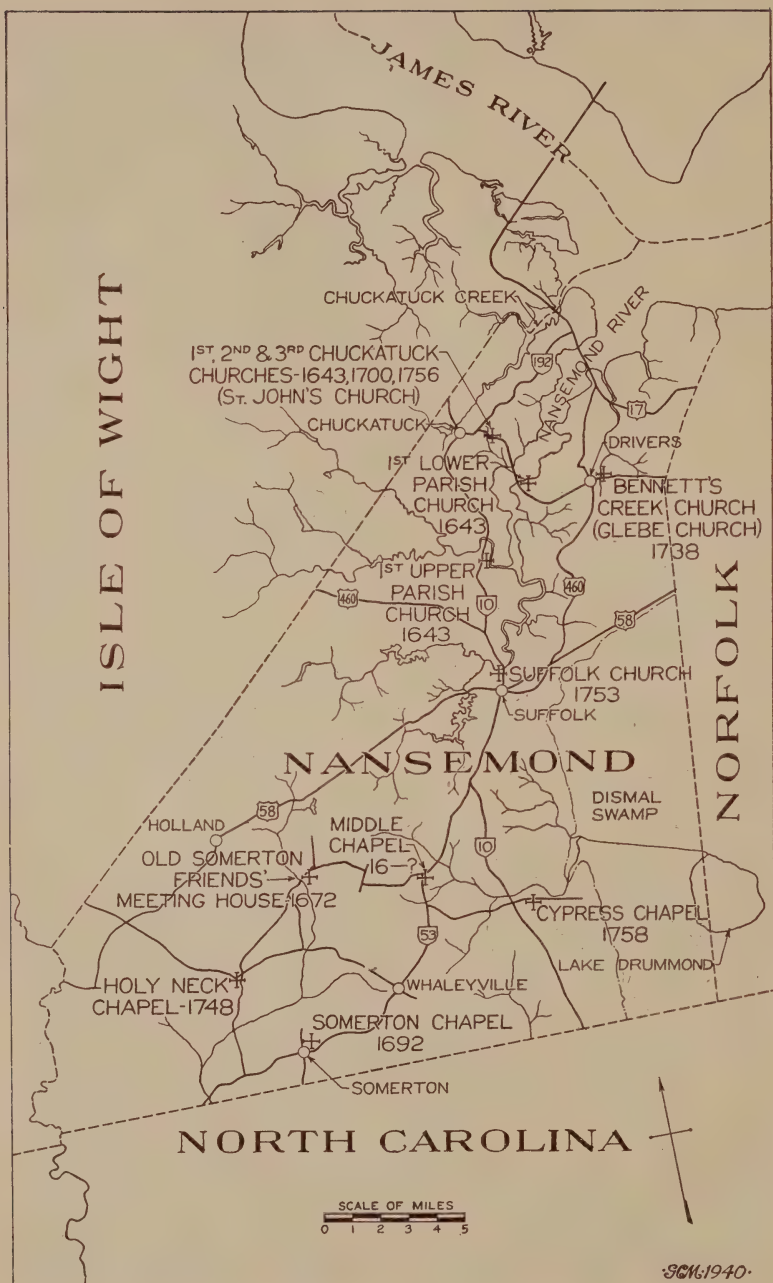


PLATE 36.

Map of Nansemond County.

CHAPTER VIII.

Nansemond County Churches

THE HISTORY OF the earliest churches in the present county of Nansemond, Virginia, is shrouded in obscurity, as a result of the destruction of the county records by three successive fires, in the years 1734, 1779 and 1866. Vestry books for both of its eighteenth-century parishes have been preserved and furnish an authentic account of its two surviving colonial churches.¹

An unsuccessful attempt at settlement of the Nansemond River region was made in 1609 by Captain John Martin with 120 men,² but the earliest permanent settlements were not established until about 1630.³ The present county's area was included in the ancient corporation of Elizabeth City, which became the original shire of the same name in 1634, when the colony was first organized in county form. About 1636, New Norfolk County was formed out of Elizabeth City County east of Hampton Roads and then subdivided, a year later, into the counties of Lower and Upper Norfolk. In March, 1645/6, Upper Norfolk County was renamed Nansimum,⁴ which has since passed through many different spellings to its present form of Nansemond. This is an Indian word, meaning "fishing point or angle" and was the name of the Indian town in the angle between Nansemond River and its Western Branch. The tribe was named for their town and the river was named for the tribe.⁵

An act of January, 1639/40, defining the boundaries of Upper and Lower Norfolk Counties, also set up coterminous parishes of the same names.⁶ In March, 1642/3, the parish of Upper Norfolk was divided into three parishes, named East, West and South.⁷ The East Parish extended up the east side of Nansemond River for ten miles above its mouth, while the West Parish had a corresponding extent on the west side of the river and included both shores of Chuckatuck Creek. By far the largest of the three parishes was the South Parish, which in-

¹ Original vestry books and photostatic copies at State Library, Richmond; transcripts at County Clerk's Office, Suffolk.

² Dunn, *History of Nansemond County*, 14.

³ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I.

⁴ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 321.

⁵ Dunn, *History of Nansemond County*, 14.

⁶ Robinson, *Virginia Counties*, 198.

⁷ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 250.

cluded the headwaters of Nansemond River and the entire southern section of the county. Lists of Virginia parishes published in 1680⁸ and 1714⁹ reveal that the South Parish soon became known as the Upper Parish, the east one as the Lower Parish, and the west one as Chicocatuck or Chuckatuck Parish. About 1725, the Lower and Chuckatuck Parishes were united to form Suffolk Parish,¹⁰ whose upper bounds were extended by act of assembly in 1744, to make a more equitable division of the county.¹¹

Nansemond county was an early stronghold of Puritans, Quakers and other Dissenters, but the Church of England was established there from the time of earliest settlement. It seems probable that regular services by its ministers were held in Upper Norfolk County as early as 1635, since there is recorded a land grant dated 3rd June in that year, allotting one hundred fifty acres "on the Nanzamund River" to "George White, minister of the word of God",¹² and the Lower Norfolk records show that the same clergyman was paid for officiating in that county in 1637.¹³ These earliest services were undoubtedly held in private houses, which accounts for the fact that no church buildings are mentioned in the act of 1643, dividing Upper Norfolk into three parishes, although disposition is made of an existing glebe and parsonage within the bounds then laid down for the East Parish.

It seems certain that a church building was erected for each of the three parishes of Upper Norfolk County, soon after their formation in 1643. The earliest recorded reference to one of these original Nansemond churches is found in a land grant of 28th October, 1672, to George and Harvey Billingsley for 500 acres in Chuckatuck, Nansemond County, formerly granted to John Billingsley and then escheated, reserving forever one acre and a half thereof, granted by Governor Berkeley to "the parish Church of Chuckatuck for the erecting a Church upon and for a burial place belonging to the said Parish forever".¹⁴ The earlier grant has not been preserved, but may have been dated at any time after 1642, the beginning of Berkeley's first administration.

⁸ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVII, 466.

⁹ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, II, 8.

¹⁰ Dunn, *Colonial Churches of Virginia*, 135.

¹¹ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, V, 269.

¹² Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 27.

¹³ *Lower Norfolk Antiquary*, I, 82.

¹⁴ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XXIX, 109.

The church mentioned in this record seems to have been the first built for the West Parish, later known as Chuckatuck Parish. Archeological evidence has recently been found that this early church was built of brick and occupied the same site as the present Chuckatuck Church. This evidence, unearthed during the digging of a grave in May, 1940, consists of the massive foundation of a brick tower, immediately outside of the present church and at the center of its west end wall.¹⁵ Since the brickwork of the present church shows that its west entrance originally had the conventional doorway trim of classic pedimented type, which would only have been fitted in the absence of a steeple, it is apparent that this tower belonged to an earlier church on the same site. The use of a sounding rod reveals that the tower foundation has an outside width of about sixteen feet, with a thickness of two feet six inches, and extends sixteen feet six inches west from the end foundation of the present church.

A colonial vestry book has fortunately been preserved for Suffolk Parish, which was formed about 1725, through the union of the Lower and Chuckatuck Parishes. Suffolk Parish never included the present city of Suffolk and the name as applied to the parish antedated the founding of the city by at least seventeen years. This vestry book extends from 1749 to 1786, but reopens after a lapse of forty years and continues until 1856.

At its opening in 1749, the vestry book reveals the existence of a Chuckatuck Church, which is proved by later entries to have been the second of that name. Two years later, on the 15th November, 1751, the vestry met at this church and provided for its replacement by a new building, through the following order: "The Vestry having this day come to a Resolution to Build a Brick Church in Chuckatuck near the place where the old one stands 60 feet in Length & 30 in Breadth from Out to Out with Cumpass Sealing. Ordered that the Churchwardens Apply to Some skillful person in Building for a Draught for the Same & that they give notice in the Virginia Gazette the time & place the sd. Church is to be Sett up to the Cheapest Undertaker & that Jonⁿ Godwin, Anthony Holladay & John King Lay out the Ground for the said Church and Yard."

On the 20th May, 1752, the vestry met again at the church and awarded the contract for the new building. The successful "undertaker" or contractor was Moses Allmand and the price was £350, of

¹⁵ *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, May 23, 1940.

which £100 was to be payable "on the Laying of the first Brick . . . provided he be Ready to goe on with the Laying the Others", £120 more "at Covering the said Church in, and the remainder at finishing the same". The contractor gave bond for the completion of the church within three years from the end of the following July.

Both of these important entries are misdated 1753, through inadvertence on the part of the clerk, who copied the vestry record into a new book in that year. This is evident from the sequence of entries, since the two in question precede vestry minutes for December, 1752. It is also confirmed by the following advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* for April 24, 1752: "To be LET the Building of a new Brick Church in Suffolk Parish near the old one in Chuckatuck on Wednesday, the 20th day of May next. A Plan of the same is to be produced to the Undertaker by Anthony Holladay, Nathaniel Wright, Churchwardens."¹⁶

On the 2nd September, 1755, this new Chuckatuck Church was provisionally accepted by the vestry, who reserved £50 of the price until the church should be finished. The contractor was granted until the 1st May, 1756, to complete the work or forfeit the final payment to whatever person was then hired to finish the building. On the date of the new church's acceptance, the churchwarden was ordered to "advertise the Pulling down the Old Church and Clearing the Yard", thus proving that the preceding building was still standing and therefore occupied a different site from that of the new church. The present Chuckatuck Church can be identified as the new structure of 1756, and the recent discovery of a tower foundation on the same site, clearly belonging to the first Chuckatuck Church, completes the proof that there were three churches of that name, built alternately on two adjoining sites in the existing churchyard.

No record has been found of the date of construction of the second church, but it was probably built about the year 1700 or even earlier. Its site may be indicated by brick remains near the southeast corner of the churchyard, which are extensive enough to represent the foundation of a brick building having the same dimensions as the present church. If so, the second Chuckatuck Church was located with its northwest corner about thirty feet east and fifty feet south of the southeast corner of the existing church building.

The third Chuckatuck Church is still in service as St. John's Church, a name first applied to it in 1828, in accordance with the prevailing

¹⁶ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), XII, 215.

fashion of renaming colonial churches with saints' names. It stands on the brow of a flat-topped hill overlooking Cedar Creek, beside the old road leading to the ancient Sleepy Hole Ferry across the Nansemond River. The old ferry has been replaced by a modern toll bridge, crossed by a private road which joins the old highway just east of the church.

The present Chuckatuck Church is an exception to the general rule that all colonial churches were set east and west, since it lies nearly northeast and southwest, with the chancel in the northeast end. To simplify reference to its arrangement, directions are herein expressed as if the church were in a conventional east-and-west location. It is a rectangular building about sixty by thirty feet outside, as specified. Its walls are twenty-one inches thick and are laid up in Flemish bond, with glazed headers. High up in the south wall, near its east end, there is cut the date 1753, indicating that the walls were completed in that year. This date is divided and combined with the initials A. H. and E. H., which are traditionally those of Anthony Holladay, churchwarden, and Esther his wife, in commemoration of their having given the parish a release deed for the church's site, long included in Holladay's Point plantation.

In accordance with colonial practice, the church originally had its main entrance in the west end, and a secondary entrance in the south side near the chancel. These doorways were of classic pedimented type, as the remains of the west doorway prove. The probable original appearance of this west doorway is shown in Plate 38, but its actual restoration has not been carried out. There were four windows in the north side, three in the south side, and two in the east end. About forty years ago, the old south doorway was converted into an additional window, and the two east windows were replaced by a smaller one on the center line. The aisle is still paved with flagstones, eighteen inches square, of brown sandstone. When the aisle pavement was raised to the level of the present wood floor, some of these flagstones were used to form steps at the church door. The old church originally had "clipped gables", the roof being hipped at the ends for half its depth.

Because of the small size of Chuckatuck Parish, no chapels of ease were required within its borders and none was built there after its combination with the Lower Parish. Chuckatuck Church was therefore well attended, and in 1779 a vestry committee was appointed "to see if it would be any disadvantage to build one or two small galleries in the Chuckatuck church, as the church is much crowded

and there is so large a congregation commonly attending the church that there is not room in the pews for their reception."

Following the disestablishment of the Church of England, the old building was abandoned for a time, but was repaired and restored to service in 1826. It continued in active use until 1856 and was again restored to service after the Civil War. The building is in good repair, although its interior has never been restored to its colonial appearance. The ancient churchyard contains no gravestones of the colonial period, but it is adorned with old cedars and box bushes and is still used for burials.

The act of 1643, establishing the East Parish, set its upper boundary above an existing glebe, on which a parsonage was standing, but no church. This glebe consisted of 450 acres, and appears to have been donated to the parish of Upper Norfolk in 1640 by Percival Champion, out of 500 acres granted to him three years earlier.¹⁷ Over 300 acres of these original glebe lands still belong to the parish, having been saved from seizure in 1817, under the act of 1802, confiscating all public glebes, by its rector, the Reverend Jacob Keeling, who successfully defended in the courts his claim that this glebe was a private donation.¹⁸ The Glebe Farm lies on both sides of the highway, at the eastern end of the modern toll bridge over Nansemond River, only a mile or two above Sleepy Hole village.

The first church of the East or Lower Parish is believed to have been built on the original glebe, as was customary in 1643. An ancient foundation which appears to be that of this early church was recently discovered by the present lessees of this farm, Garland and Emmett Jones, who broke a plow-point upon it, during cultivation of the site. This foundation lies in an open field, a quarter mile west of the highway and a hundred yards from the river. By means of a sounding rod and partial excavation, the foundation has been determined to be forty feet long by twenty feet wide but only 1½ bricks thick, so that it must have been the underpinning of a wooden building. The size and proportions of the foundation and its east-and-west location are appropriate for an early colonial church or chapel and there is no record or tradition of a house in this vicinity.

The vestry's decision to replace this old church, after nearly a century of use, is recorded in an order of council dated 15th December, 1737. This order rehearses that "Whereas upon Examination

¹⁷ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 65., 119.

¹⁸ *Southall Papers*, William and Mary College Library.

and proof of the ruinous Condition of the Church built on the south Side Nansemond River in the part formerly called the lower parish. It was in a full Vestry held the 16th of May 1737 Resolved and Agreed to build a new Brick Church at a place called Jordans Mill Hill as more Convenient for the people on both sides Nansemond River then the Old Church was."¹⁹ The vestry mentioned belonged to the new Suffolk Parish, formed about a dozen years earlier, through the union of Chuckatuck and Lower Parishes.

The council had acted in response to a petition by the minister and a minority of the vestry, which reveals that the building of this new church had been delayed through friction between vestrymen chosen from the two component parishes. This had culminated in the refusal of two Chuckatuck members of the vestry's building committee for the church, Edward and Thomas Godwin, to perform their duty or allow others to do so. By this refusal, the Chuckatuck members evidently hoped to delay the new church's erection until their majority in the vestry could rescind the construction order and make Chuckatuck the parish church. The council's ruling was that the new church be constructed as ordered, using a bequest by John Yates of the former Lower Parish to help defray the cost. To forestall further trouble they also ordered that "in the future choice of Vestry men none of the Uper Inhabitants be chosen until there be an Equal Number of Vestry men on each side the Nansamond River."

The new church ordered in 1737 is the present Glebe Church, which stands on the north side of U. S. Route 460, the old highway from Portsmouth, a short distance east of the present village of Drivers. The church is situated on high ground at the head of the west fork of Bennett's Creek, anciently dammed above the highway to form a millpond that has only recently disappeared. In colonial times, the building was known as Bennett's Creek Church. Its present name commemorates the parish's being one of the few left in Virginia that still retain their colonial glebe lands.

The site of the new church formed part of a plantation willed to the parish by Richard Bennett in 1676, to be leased for the benefit of the parish poor. The vestry book shows that, in leasing out this plantation in 1749, the vestry reserved "the land between the Hors Road & between the Church & the Creek and soe to the spring and Thirty yards Distant Every other way from the Church to be kept and Reserved for the Use of the Church". The bounds laid down

¹⁹ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council*, IV, 42.

in this order agree closely with those of the present churchyard at the Glebe Church. The old "horse road," deeply cut into the soil, is still evident between the churchyard and the present highway, and the original spring lies just below the old road, on the north side of the creek.

Since the Bennett's Creek Church is first mentioned in the Suffolk vestry book as "the Church" or "the Lower Church", while the other church in the combined parish is always distinguished as "Chuckatuck Church", it is apparent that the new building erected in 1737-8 was regarded as the parish church.

At the opening of the Revolutionary War in the spring of 1775, Bennett's Creek Church was the scene of a stirring encounter between its Tory parson, the Reverend John Agnew, and the patriotic magistrate and vestryman, William Cowper. Preaching against the sin of disloyalty and rebellion, on the text: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's", the minister was ordered from the pulpit by Cowper and replied that he was doing his Master's business. "Which master?" cried the patriot, "Your Master in heaven, or your master over the seas? You must leave this church or I will use force!" Rather than be the cause of violence within the sanctuary, the loyalist minister walked out of the church that he had served for over twenty years and never returned to it. He became the chaplain of the Queen's Rangers, a British regiment in which his son, Stair Agnew, was a captain, and father and son were later captured and sent to France as prisoners, while Cowper was chosen to represent the county in the Virginia Revolutionary Convention of 1776.²⁰

The existing Glebe Church is a very small building, only about forty-five feet long by twenty-three feet wide, inside, with walls twenty-one inches, or only $2\frac{1}{2}$ brick lengths, thick, laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers. The old building originally had, as customary, a main entrance in the west end and a side doorway in the south wall near its east end. There were three windows on the north side, two on the south, and a chancel window in the middle of the east end. Both doorways, like the windows, were finished with plain relieving arches, since the building's small size did not allow room for the more elaborate pedimented doorways typical of the period of construction.

As a result of the small size of this parish church, the vestry, on the 13th July, 1759, ordered its enlargement by the addition of "a

²⁰ Dunn, *History of Nansemond County*, 41.

Brick piece to the North Side of the upper end, 25 foot long, 23 foot wide, in the clear of the inside". The specification for this addition throws much light on the details of the original church. It requires the contractor "to build on each side [of the addition] pews 9 foot wide and five foot deep, leaving an Alley [aisle] 5 foot wide, the pews to be Square pannels as the old work is. Two sash Windows in each Side of the bigness of the old ones but to be one foot lower placed, a Door and Door Case in the end hanged with good hinges and a Bolt or other way to leave the door well shut." The four remaining windows in the old church were to be set one foot lower at the sill to match the windows of the new wing. The contractor for the addition appears to have been Captain James Riddick.

In order to provide more seating capacity, the addition was to have "a Gallerey in the North End and a Window in this Gallerey the same size as the window in the old Gallerey is", showing that a gallery already existed in the west end of the original church, lighted by the small window still to be seen in this location. A specification requirement for "a new Door Case" to be made and placed in the northwest corner of the old church suggests that the old west gallery was kept locked during service, like the college students' gallery at Bruton Church, Williamsburg, as otherwise a doorway would not have been required. Such galleries were often devoted to the use of the schoolboys of the parish.

A private gallery or "hanging pew" was built by Captain Riddick, for his own use, in the southeast corner of the older part of the church, "to extend as wide as the corner pew below, in length to farther side of pew on other side of the alley and to make a door outside of church to pass in the said Gallerey", the builder paying £10 for the privilege. Since the existing south doorway directly under this pew would have made an additional entrance at the ground level superfluous, this new doorway must have been cut at the gallery level and reached by an outside covered stairway, similar to those once built outside of Bruton Church for access to its organ loft and servants' gallery. The new doorway may have been cut in the east gable or in the south wall of the church.

Final details of the arrangement of the enlarged church are given by a provision that "the Pulpit be placed to the Corner in the middle of the old part of the Church where the new building goes off from" and that "two turned pillars [be] put under the plate of the old work", where the original north wall was torn out for the addition.

All of the above details have been incorporated in Plate 40, showing the probable arrangement of the enlarged church building. The only further change in the old church's colonial interior seems to have been the building of an additional private gallery, probably opposite Riddick's, by James Murdaugh, a newly elected vestryman, in 1777.

The vestry record reveals that Suffolk Parish elected a vestry for only two years after the disestablishment of the Church of England in 1785 and then became inactive for forty years, while its abandoned churches moldered away. Their ruinous condition at the end of this time is suggested by a story told to Miss Annie Lee Jones of Drivers, the Glebe Church's oldest communicant, by the late Mr. Gomer, formerly county clerk of Nansemond. Mr. Gomer said that, as a boy, he had talked with an old peddler from North Carolina, who had stopped at the ruined Glebe Church during the War of 1812, to feed his horse, and observed that its north wing seemed then about to go down, its roof having fallen in, and that hogs were rooting inside the empty building.

A new vestry was elected in 1826, who restored Chuckatuck Church to service, but the old Glebe Church remained desolate and deserted for another thirty years before enough money had been subscribed to repair its main part and replace it in use. In 1856, the ruined north wing was torn down and its bricks were used to close the opening left in the church wall and to build a small entry and vesting room at the west end of the building. A north entrance was provided, opposite the old south doorway, and a gallery was built in the east end. At this time, the chancel was placed in the west end of the church, thus reversing the colonial arrangement of the building. These repairs cost \$1,117.00. About forty years ago, a new front entrance was made by enlarging the original chancel window, and the north and south doorways were converted into new windows.

One account of the rebuilding of the Glebe Church in 1856 states that the original church was torn down but that the mortar in its walls was so hard that few of the old bricks could be used again, so that they were only used in the construction of the vesting room, the rest of the church being rebuilt with new bricks. This account was based on hearsay and written from memory, hence is doubly unreliable, and it is manifestly erroneous, since the main walls of the existing church are unmistakably of the very finest colonial workmanship.

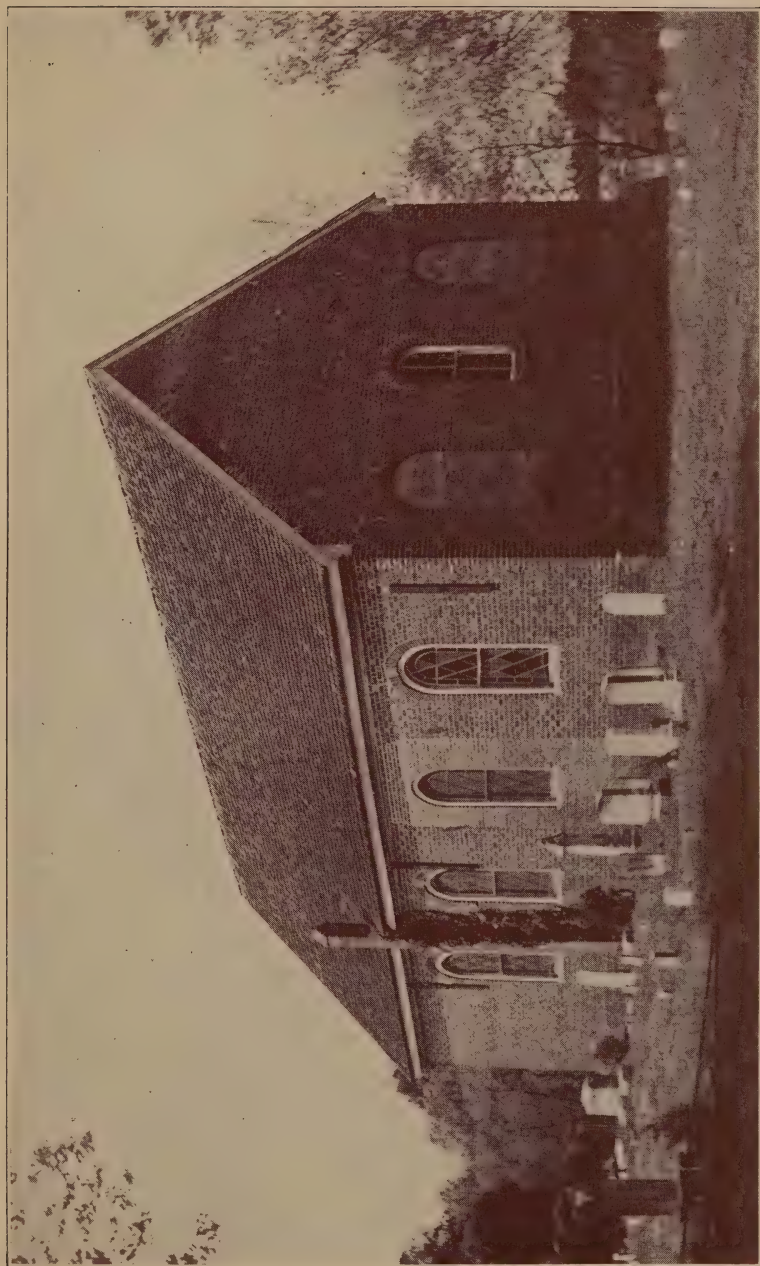


PLATE 37.

St. John's Church, Chuckatuck, and churchyard.



West Doorway (Restored)
Chuckatuck Church: Nansemond Co: 1756
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 ft.

PLATE 38.

*Restoration of west doorway,
Chuckatuck Church.*

This story seems to have originated from the tearing down of the ruined north wing, yet it is apparent that the bricks of this wing were not only used to build the vesting room but to close in the church wall. If these were not the original walls of the Glebe Church, there would have been no opening to close up, where its north wing once stood, and the conversion of its doorway would not have been necessary. The foundation of the former north wing can be traced with a sounding rod, and is as specified in location and size. Two of the colonial bricks from the north wing, which are of different size and color than those in the older walls, bear the dates 1771 and 1790, and several other bricks from the same source, dated 1843 and 1849, prove that the ruined walls of the wing were still standing when the church was rebuilt. The date of construction, 1737, is shallowly cut in a brick in the old church's east wall near the front doorway. There is evidence in the brickwork that the windows of the old church, originally seven feet tall, were set a foot lower at the sill in 1759, as specified, and that the sills were lowered another two feet during the repairs of 1856, giving the windows their present height of nine feet.

The first church of the Upper Parish of Nansemond County was a brick structure and is believed to have been built within a few years after the formation of the parish in 1643. Through the research of Major W. E. MacClenny of Suffolk, the county's principal resident historian, the site of this church has been discovered on the old Bunting farm, now owned by Mrs. George E. Bunting and Mrs. W. T. Gay, which lies about seven miles north of Suffolk, on State Route 10. When this farm was purchased by the late Mr. Bunting's grandfather, the old church's walls were still standing, several feet high, but were gradually carried away to furnish building material for the neighborhood, until only the foundation was left.

This ancient churchyard is beautifully situated on high ground overlooking the Western Branch of Nansemond River, and its location agrees with references to "the Church Road" in the vestry's orders to the "procession masters" who annually reviewed the boundaries of the parishioners' lands. The site is now covered with trees, some of them very old and large, and is adorned with the old white-flowering periwinkle, found in the earliest colonial graveyards. A dense layer of broken brick from the ruins makes it impracticable to sound out the church foundation; and partial excavation, carried out some years ago by the Reverend Joseph B. Dunn, a former rector of St. Paul's Church, Suffolk, has failed to reveal its exact

location. The iron clapper of the church bell was picked up in the ruins, upon a recent visit.

The graveyard contains only one colonial tombstone and a fragment of another. The surviving stone is in perfect condition and marks the grave of Captain Thomas Bell of Boston, who died the 29th July, 1729. It is evidently of New England origin and bears the conventional skull and cross bones often seen in old northern graveyard inscriptions.

On the same farm, which is believed to have been the parish glebe, is a quaint old brick house, possibly once used as a parsonage, which has always been called "the Abbey". It is perhaps the oldest house in Nansemond County, but is now only a roofless ruin. Near it are exceptionally large and ancient locust and chinaberry trees, with some fine old cedars and mulberries.

The Upper Parish vestry book opens in 1743 and shows that this old "Brick Church" was then in service, after what was probably a century of use. The replacement of this old building by a "new Brick Church in the old field of James March, convenient to a good spring 60 feet long and 30 feet wide, or other dimensions as may be agreed on hereafter," was ordered by the vestry on the 7th October, 1746. A committee was appointed to lay out two acres of land on March's plantation for a churchyard and to prepare a bill of sale for it. The committee was also to "provide a plan for a church of the valueu and not exceeding £500," and to "advertise the undertaking of the said church at the Middle Chapel" of the parish. It is apparent that this new church was never accepted by the vestry and it seems probable that it was never built.

With the vestry's failure to receive the new church ordered in 1746, the need for replacement of the old parish church became more pressing. On the 14th October, 1748, the vestry therefore resolved "that a handsome brick church ought to be built in this Parish" and ordered two acres of land to be bought from Jethro Sumner and Margaret Sullivan, his wife (the heiress to the original fifty-acre site of the new city) "at the head of Suffolk Town". The new church was "to be built according to plan already drawn by Mr. Rand" and was to be completed in four years.

Although Mr. Sumner was a vestryman and churchwarden of the Upper Parish, it is recorded in the vestry book that he refused to sell his land at a reasonable price and that a site had to be bought

from another landowner, believed to be Colonel Daniel Pugh, who became the builder of the new church.

Following their decision to erect a new church at Suffolk, the vestry resolved that the old parish church was now useless and that the minister should no longer preach there. In response to protests from parishioners living near the old building, this order was revoked in March, 1749, and services were resumed there and continued until the new church's completion.

The new Suffolk Church was a cross-shaped brick structure and stood on the west side of what was formerly known as Back Street, but is now called Church Street, the existing Western Avenue having been cut through its site in modern times. Its dimensions are not given in the vestry book, but it is recorded that the walls were made 3 brick lengths or about twenty-eight inches in thickness, below the water-table, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ brick lengths, above it. The windows were ordered to have "compass heads", or circular arches, instead of square tops.

The usual gallery was built in the west end of the nave, as a parish gallery, free to all members of the congregation. As in other cross-shaped colonial churches, the right to build private galleries in the two transept wings was granted to influential parishioners, Lemuel Riddick being allotted the south wing for this purpose and David Meade the north one. Both men were at various times churchwardens and vestrymen. For this privilege, Riddick paid £20, to be expended on ornaments for the church, while Meade agreed to furnish and install a suitable bell for the new building. The south end of the parish gallery was sold in 1753, for a private pew, to John Watson and Alexander Cairns, who paid £6 for it, the money being laid out in more church ornaments, including a large Bible and two prayer books. This Bible is still in use at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Suffolk and bears the date 1751.

The new church was completed on the 26th July, 1753, and its interior was embellished with a fine pipe organ, purchased through popular subscription, and with the church ornaments from the Old Brick Church and the parish chapel nearest Suffolk, both of which were then retired from service. One of the ornaments from the Old Brick Church, a pulpit cloth traditionally given by Queen Anne, is still in use at St. Paul's Church, Suffolk. The churchyard was "paled in" with a wooden fence in 1758, and three years later it was enlarged by the purchase of an adjoining lot from the builder, Colonel Daniel

Pugh. The contract price for the church is recorded as £540, but it was increased 10% for "Sundry Additions", making a total of £594.

During the occupation of Suffolk by the British forces in 1779-81, the parish church escaped destruction by fire. This is apparent from the diary of the Methodist Bishop Asbury, who rode through Suffolk in December, 1782, and reported that "most of the houses here, except the church, are destroyed or more or less injured."²¹ The church suffered seriously from abuse and neglect, however, and after the war, funds were lacking to restore it to service. A subscription was opened in 1791 for the repair of the church and chapels, but it was unsuccessful and the church then went completely to ruin. It was torn down about 1802, according to Major MacClenny, and its bricks were sold to build a dwelling on the site of the present City Market. Some of them had already been used to build the Union Chapel at Suffolk in the year 1800 and one of the old church's pews was also installed in this building. Many of these bricks, when made, were inscribed with the sacred monogram I. H. S., and these have been seen in the pavements of Suffolk by residents now living. Mr. MacClenny also relates that, during the final stage of the old church's abandonment and decay, boys took reeds from its pipe organ and blew them up and down the city streets.

After the church had disappeared, the old churchyard continued to be used as a burial ground for white people and, as late as 1850, was still filled with tombstones. Only one of these is yet visible, that of Stephen H. Waterbury of Stamford, Connecticut, dated 11th November, 1817. After the Civil War, the churchyard came to be used as a cemetery for colored people, many of whose graves were dug through the foundation of the old building. As a result of this practice and of the cutting of a street through the site, no trace of the foundation is now evident.

Soon after the opening of the Upper Parish vestry book, mention is made of two chapel buildings, called the Lower Chapel and the Upper Chapel. These were evidently chapels of ease built in outlying sections of this large parish, in accordance with an act of assembly of 1662, requiring such chapels to be built for the convenience of parishioners living at a distance from the parish church.

It is apparent from the vestry record that the Lower Chapel soon became known as the Middle Chapel, perhaps to distinguish it from the Old Brick Church, which was the Lower Church of the parish.

²¹ Bangs and Mason, *Journal of Rev. Francis Asbury*, I, 353.

There appears to be no record of the age of the Middle Chapel, but it was probably not as old as the Brick Church, even though both buildings were abandoned in the same year, upon completion of the new parish church in Suffolk in 1753. This seems evident from the fact that the chapel, although a frame building, outlasted the Brick Church by many years. The site of the Middle Chapel now lies in a cornfield on the east side of State Route 53, nearly opposite the present Liberty Spring Christian Church and about three miles north of Whaleyville. It seems probable that the old building, like other colonial chapels in this region, was used for a time by itinerant preachers and then stood vacant until after the Civil War, when it was moved away and converted into a barn. Some of its timbers were recently visible in a later barn on the Fairlee F. Brinkley farm in this vicinity.

The Upper Chapel was traditionally built about 1692 on land donated by Captain Hugh Campbell, a pious philanthropist who had petitioned the government in the preceding year, offering to give 600 acres of land for the support of readers, who should hold services at three points remote from church facilities, and to buy Bibles for their use. One of these points was "Sormer towne" [Somerton] in Nansemond County, and the other two were the Blackwater River in Isle of Wight and the North River in Norfolk County.²² This Upper Chapel, being situated near Somerton, soon came to be known as Somerton Chapel.²³ It is mentioned as a landmark in Byrd's "Dividing Line History" of 1732,²⁴ and in an act of 1736 confirming title to land sold in 1721 "in the old field where Summertown Chapel now stands, in the county of Nansemond".²⁵ Its site lies on a little knoll on the north side of the road to Whaleyville, about a quarter mile east of Somerton village, and just west of a small branch of Somerton Creek.

This old Upper Chapel was ordered to be replaced in 1747 by a new frame building fifty by twenty-six feet in size, with fourteen foot pitch or height of side walls and a gallery at the west end. A two-acre site for the new chapel was purchased from Hardy Ralls "at a place called Holy Neck on the Backswamp". The name Holy Neck was traditionally derived from the fact that the Indians had a "husk-

²² *Lower Norfolk Antiquary*, I, 65.

²³ *Upper Parish Vestry Book*.

²⁴ Boyd, *Byrd's Dividing Line Histories*, 14.

²⁵ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 529.

anawing" place here, at which they held their religious rites, and hence regarded the spot as sacred. There is said to be an Indian burial mound in the woods behind the chapel site, which is impressively located on a high point of land in the fork of two ancient roads, cut deep in the sandy soil through many years of use and leading down across the Chapel Swamp, a short distance to the west.

Holy Neck Chapel, called "the Upper New Chapel" in the vestry book, succeeded Somerton Chapel as the upper chapel of ease for the parish and, being situated only three miles northwest of Somerton village, also came to be known as Somerton Chapel. The original chapel of that name, although abandoned by the parish, remained in existence and was used for occasional services by itinerant preachers. From these services developed its regular use by a newly organized Methodist congregation, who later moved into a new church just south of Somerton, leaving the old chapel, traditionally a weather-boarded log structure, to final ruin.

Following the Revolutionary War, Holy Neck Chapel was abandoned by the parish and was used by a Methodist preacher, the Reverend James O'Kelly, and upon his establishment of the denomination later known as the Christian Church of the South, it became one of the first churches of this sect. In their hands, the colonial chapel first had a shed added to it, for accommodation of the colored people, and was later enlarged by the addition of a house moved from a nearby site. It was replaced in 1835 by a new church, forty-five feet long by thirty-five feet wide, with a door in one end and a door in each side. The present frame church on this site was built in 1888 and remodelled in 1916.²⁶

The next chapel built for the Upper Parish was the Nottoway Chapel, a small frame building only thirty feet by twenty-four feet in size, with walls ten feet high, two doors, and two windows in each side and one in the east end. It was ordered on 26th July, 1753, and was specified to be finished by the last day of July, 1754, "in the same manner as Summerton Chapel is", referring to the new chapel at Holy Neck.

Nottoway Chapel's name was derived from its location on the south side of Nottoway River, in territory which in 1785 became part of Southampton County. It was built in response to a petition from the inhabitants of this region, who were then entirely without church

²⁶ MacClenny, *Churches of Eastern Conference*, *Christian Sun*, Oct. 26, 1922.

facilities, and its one-acre site was purchased from James Cary, Sr., as "the most convenientest place to set a chapel over the Nottoway." In 1758, a ferry was ordered to be kept over Nottoway River to the chapel on Sundays. The new chapel seems to have enjoyed only a brief term of active service, as it is not mentioned in the vestry book after 1760, when the minister was ordered to preach there four times a year. It appears to have been later taken over by the Methodists.

The last chapel erected by the Upper Parish vestry was the Cypress Chapel, which was ordered in 1758 and was finished a year later. It was a frame building of the same dimensions as the Nottoway Chapel and stood on the south bank of Cypress Swamp, only a mile west of the great Dismal Swamp. The site now lies on a side road leading east from State Route 10, about eight miles due south of Suffolk. The new chapel was first ordered to be built on the land of Thomas Harrel, but this was found to be entailed and without a clear title, and it was then decided to build it on a lot purchased from John Norfleet. In 1760, the minister was ordered to preach four times a year at the Cypress Chapel, which appears to have remained in service until the close of the vestry book in 1793.

Cypress Chapel, like the old chapel at Holy Neck, was later occupied by a Methodist congregation under the leadership of the Reverend James O'Kelly and this congregation followed him when he separated from the Methodist Church. The old chapel therefore became a church of the Christian denomination, whose Eastern Conference met there in 1819. The original building was replaced in the following year by a new church, which was later enlarged. In 1846 and again in 1870, new churches were built in this location.²⁷ The actual site of the colonial Cypress Chapel is believed to have been a little east of the present church, which still goes by the old chapel's name.

Since Nansemond county was one of the early centers of independent religion in the colony of Virginia, several colonial houses of worship were built within its borders by dissenters from the Established Church. One of the first Independents in Nansemond County was Richard Bennett, who became governor of Virginia under Cromwell, and later retired to Maryland, where he died a Quaker in 1676. Bennett sent his brother Philip to the General Court of Massachusetts in 1641, asking that Puritan ministers be sent to Nansemond. These ministers were well received and they established an independent

²⁷ MacGlenny, *Churches of Eastern Conference*, *Christian Sun*, Oct. 26, 1922.

church, which was soon broken up by the authorities and its leaders banished. It seems certain that their meetings were held in private houses and there is no record of their having erected a church building.

Governor Winthrop's journals and other contemporary religious publications in New England express the Puritans' conviction that the ensuing Indian massacre of 1644 was a visitation on the Virginians for their rejection of these missionaries.²⁸

The Society of Friends, popularly known as Quakers, was founded by George Fox in England in 1648, and Quaker missionaries in the colonies made many converts, whose fanatical zeal provoked repressive measures by the government. By the beginning of the last quarter of the seventeenth century, however, the Quakers were tolerated to the extent of being permitted to maintain their own meeting-houses, although they were still required to pay tithes to the Established Church.

Following a visit by George Fox to Virginia in 1672, Quaker meetings were established in Nansemond County near Chuckatuck and Somerton, and meeting-houses were built at these points. The site of Old Somerton Friends' Meeting-house is still occupied by a modern church of this sect, standing on the east bank of Quaker Swamp, three miles southeast of Holland and about six miles north of Somerton.

The exact location of the Chuckatuck Meeting-house has not been determined, since the name Chuckatuck was applied to the entire peninsula between Nansemond River and Chuckatuck Creek, but its site was not in the present Chuckatuck village. A Quaker map of about 1790 shows, on the north side of Nansemond River, an unnamed meeting-house which, from its location, can only have been the Chuckatuck building.²⁹ Although the map's topography is somewhat vague, this meeting-house appears to have stood about halfway down the peninsula from Chuckatuck village.

In the year 1702, Quaker meeting-houses were built on the Western and Southern Branches of Nansemond River, both being small frame structures of the plainest character. The Western Branch Meeting-house was built "by the highway side", on the land of Francis Hutchins, Sr., and cost only 3200 pounds of tobacco, as compared

²⁸ Winthrop, *History of New England*, II, 164.

²⁹ *A Map of Meetings of Friends in Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina*: photostatic copy at Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia.

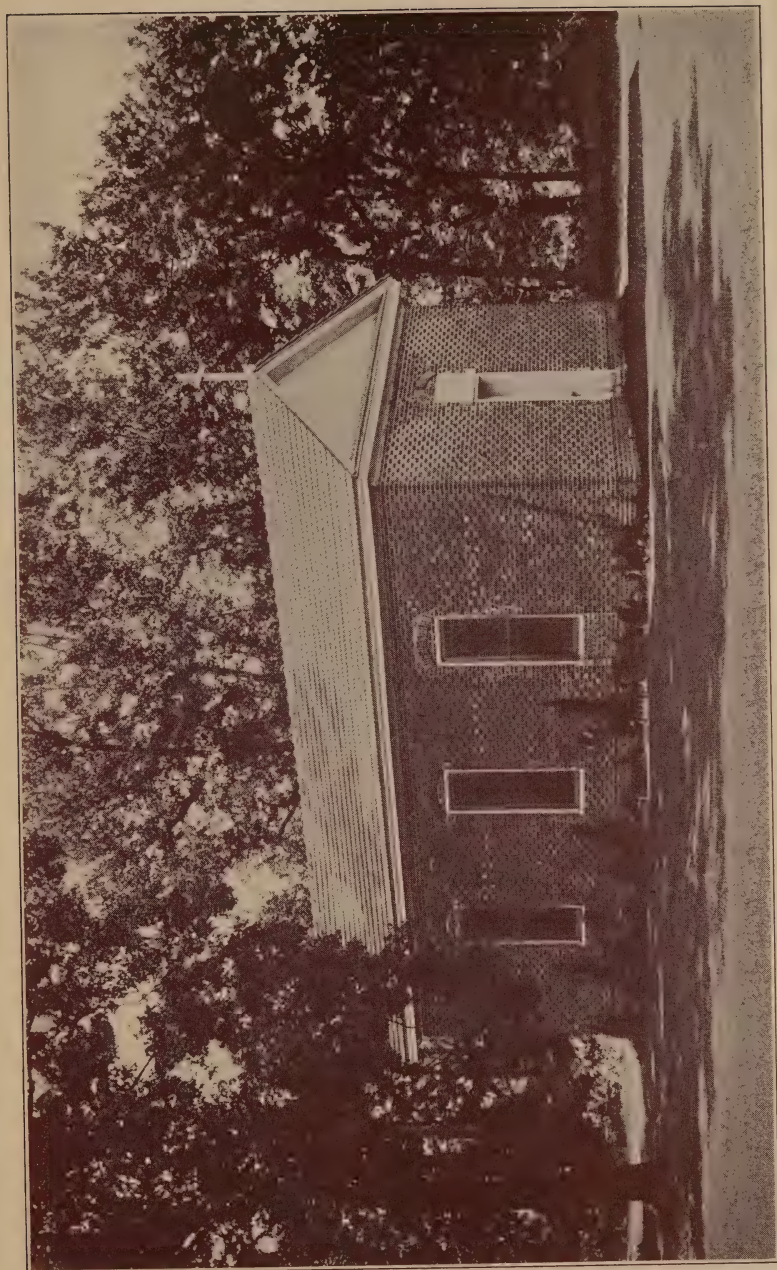


PLATE 39.

Bennett's Creek Church (Glebe Church), in 1926.

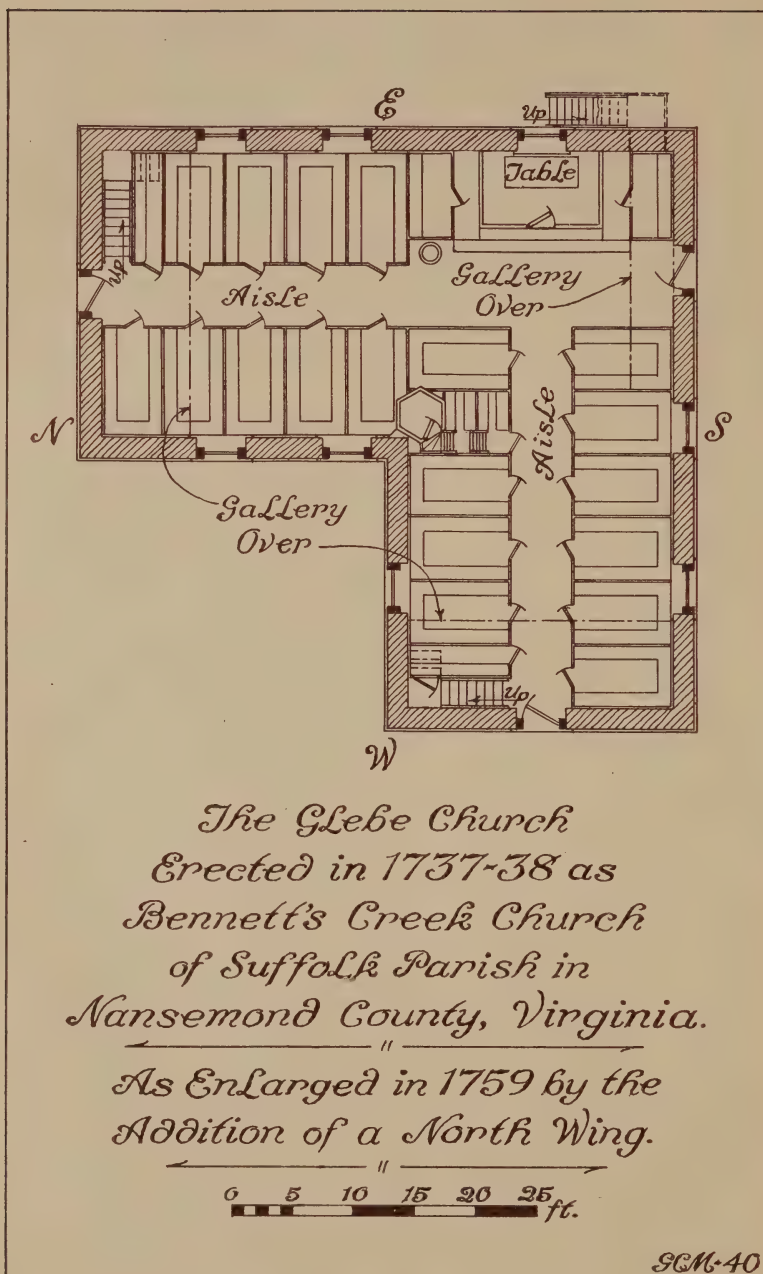


PLATE 40. Bennett's Creek Church in 1759, interior arrangement.

with 100,000 pounds for a brick church of the same period. It was specified to be "twenty five foott in length & twenty foott in width fitted every way with friends' Benches suitable for such a House." The Southern Branch Meeting-house was erected on Levin Rufkin's plantation, at a cost of about 3900 pounds of tobacco, and was only twenty feet square, having "the Inside seled with Planke also the floor laid with Planke and fitted with formes and seates."

Before 1706, a meeting-house was built by the roadside on a broad neck of land east of Bennett's Creek, about three miles above its mouth. The Quaker map already mentioned indicates that this meeting-house was known as "Murdock's" [Murdaugh's]. This ancient building was a barn-like structure whose frame was still standing in 1840 and whose roof was finally moved out into a nearby field as a shelter for stock. The Quakers became so numerous in this section that the place has ever since been known as Quaker Neck.³⁰

³⁰ Jordan, *Farms in Lower Parish, Nansemond County*, 12.

CHAPTER IX.

Isle of Wight and Southampton County Churches

ONLY ONE OF the colonial churches of Isle of Wight County has survived until the present day, and the churches of its daughter county of Southampton have completely disappeared, many of them so long ago that even their sites are generally unknown. A great part of the colonial records of Isle of Wight has been preserved, including an eighteenth-century vestry book for the coterminous parish, and the Southampton records are complete from the date of the county's creation.

The present counties of Isle of Wight and Southampton once formed part of the corporation of James City, the first of the four great boroughs which, together with the Eastern Shore, composed the Virginia colony in 1618.¹ Upon the division of the colony into shires in 1634, this territory was set up as Warrosquyoake County,² which was bounded by the original shires of James City, on the west, and Elizabeth City, on the east, and extended southwestward from the James River to the North Carolina line.

The new county's Indian name of Warrosquyoake was derived from that of the tribe originally found occupying this section. Since this name was difficult both to spell and pronounce, at least twenty-five variations of it appearing in colonial records, it was soon replaced by the English title, Isle of Wight, which came into use by 1637³ or earlier. The county's new name was adopted in recognition of the first important settlement in this region, established by Captain Christopher Lawne at Lawne's Creek in 1619, and known as Isle of Wight Plantation as early as 1620.⁴

After some early adjustments of Isle of Wight's boundaries with the neighboring counties of Surry and Nansemond, the first reduction in the county's area occurred in 1733, when its territory southwest of the Meherrin River was ceded to Brunswick County⁵, the same land later becoming part of Greensville County at its formation in 1781.⁶

¹ Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London*, III, 100.

² Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 224.

³ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 69 (Patent of John Upton).

⁴ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), VII, 205.

⁵ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 355.

⁶ *Ibid.*, X, 363.

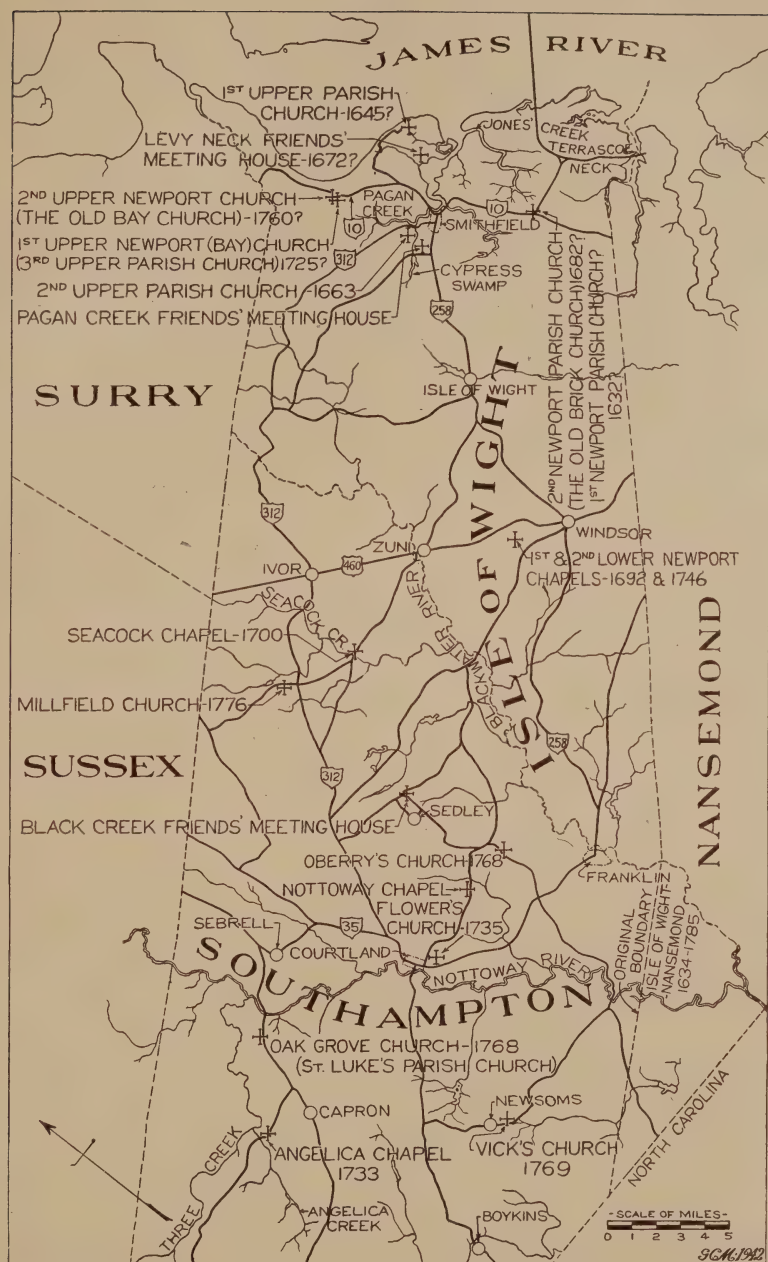


PLATE 41. Map of Isle of Wight and Southampton Counties.

The remainder of the original shire of Isle of Wight was divided at the Blackwater River in 1749, and the portion west of this stream was organized as Southampton County⁷. The new county attained its present limits in 1786, when all of the southwestern tip of Nansemond County, lying west of the Blackwater River, was added to Southampton⁸.

The first parish organization in what later became Isle of Wight County is recorded in 1629 as already existing at Warrosquyoake, which appears to have become a general term for the entire settlement along the present county's James River waterfront. Upon the division of the colony into eight shires in 1634, this original plantation parish became coterminous with the county and remained so for several years. In 1643, both county and parish were subdivided, lengthwise, into two parishes, first known simply as the Upper Parish and the Lower Parish⁹, and later as Warrosquyoake and Newport Parishes.

With the extension of settlement to Isle of Wight's upper border at the North Carolina-Virginia boundary line, the county's two parishes became recognized as inconveniently long. This led to their division at the Blackwater River in 1734, their lower parts being combined as Newport Parish, while their upper parts were united to form the parish of Nottoway¹⁰. Fifteen years later, Nottoway Parish was cut off from Isle of Wight as Southampton County, and in 1762, its territory south of the Nottoway River was erected as St. Luke's Parish¹¹.

After the disastrous Indian massacre of 1622, the Isle of Wight plantation was temporarily abandoned and, although the Indians were driven out by Sir George Yeardley in the following year, only 31 people were living at the original settlements of Warrosquyoake and Basse's Choice in 1625¹². Once the Indian menace had been broken, recovery of the Isle of Wight settlement was swift, and in the 1634 census, 522 persons were reported in the county.¹³

The early importance of Warrosquyoake is shown by an order of assembly issued in March, 1623, and renewed in February, 1631/2, making it one of only four places, outside of Jamestown itself, where

⁷ Robinson, *Virginia Counties*, 206.

⁸ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, XII, 69.

⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 268.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, IV, 444.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, VII, 618.

¹² *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), VII, 217.

¹³ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, VIII, 302.

courts were to be held for the colony¹⁴. The minutes of the General Court of the colony show that, in 1629, Warrosquyoake was the only settlement which delivered to the government complete records of monthly court proceedings, parish levies and disbursements, and christenings, marriages and deaths, revealing a high degree of civil and ecclesiastical organization at that early date¹⁵.

The fact that this report for the plantation parish of Warrosquyoake was submitted to the court by its "mynisters and Churchwardens", strongly suggests that a church, even if only temporary in character, was in service at that time, since the appointment of churchwardens, by the very nature of their duties, presupposes the existence of a church building. Since no other record of this hypothetical church has been found, it cannot be brought within the scope of this chapter.

With such a complete organization in existence at Warrosquyoake in 1629, there is nothing inherently improbable in the building of a permanent church there to carry out the provisions of an Act of February, 1631/2, "that in all such places where any churches are wanting, or decayed, the inhabitants are tyed to contribute towards the building of a church . . . the commissioners together with the mynisters churchwardens and chiefe of the parish to appoynt both the most convenient place . . . and also to hire . . . any workman and order such necessities as are requisite. This they are to effect [before Christmas] or else the sayd commissioners are to forfeit 50l in money"¹⁶.

The only colonial house of worship still standing in Isle of Wight is the present Old Brick Church, a noble Gothic structure, with buttressed walls and a massive tower. This ancient building stands just northwest of the intersection of the James River Bridge road with U. S. Route 10, at Benn's Church Post Office, named for the modern Methodist Church on the opposite side of the bridge highway. Its present appearance is shown in Plate 2.

It has long been traditional in the county that the Old Brick Church was built in 1632, and if so, it is not only the oldest Protestant church in the United States but also the earliest building of English origin still extant in America. Unfortunately for the acceptance of this tradition, its credibility has been seriously questioned by com-

¹⁴ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 168.

¹⁵ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 200.

¹⁶ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 160.

petent authorities, and in the absence of records definitely establishing its truth or falsity, both sides of the controversy must be fairly presented.

This tradition is firmly based on a record reliably asserted to have been found in the first Newport Parish vestry book, to the effect that the Old Brick Church was built in 1632. This ancient volume long since crumbled into dust, as a result of its burial, with other county records, for protection from British raiders during the Revolutionary War¹⁷. The former existence of such a record is well substantiated, but it is still possible that it may have referred to the building of an earlier church on the same site, just as a vestry record often quoted as an order for the shingling of the Old Brick Church, in 1737, actually refers to the repair of the Bay Church in the same parish.

Further evidence that the Old Brick Church was built in 1632 is found in the recorded existence of three dated bricks taken from its walls¹⁸. Such dated bricks, as well as similarly dated timbers, are of great significance, if genuine, and in the case of buildings whose period is known, are uniformly consistent with other evidence of their date of construction. Only one of these bricks has been preserved and is now set into the chancel woodwork of the restored church, but unfortunately, the shape of the figure "3" is vague enough for it to be read as an "8" by skeptics of the old Church's antiquity.

Since the dated surface of at least one of these bricks is said to have been partly covered with mortar when it was found, it must have been laid up in the wall's interior, and it is possible that all of them were thus embedded, for none of them seems to have been noted until the old church's restoration. This would explain their previous invisibility, which would otherwise seem strange indeed, since one of these bricks is said to have come from above the main doorway.¹⁹ The embedding of these dated bricks also suggests that they may have been salvaged from the demolished walls of an earlier church and used as fillers in the walls of the present building. Under any circumstances, if embedded in the wall, these bricks must have been dated before being used, indicating that, if the church actually dates from 1632, it was begun in that year and finished perhaps four or five years later, like the brick church at Jamestown.

¹⁷ *Virginia Historical Collections*, XI, 156.

¹⁸ *Virginia Historical Collections*, XI, 157.

¹⁹ Letter from H. D. Hosier, Suffolk, on file at Isle of Wight Courthouse.

In view of the reduced population of the Warrosquyoake settlement, through sickness and Indian massacre, in the decade prior to 1632, this is much more plausible than that the church was completed in 1632. It is also more consistent with the fact that in colonial vestry books, the most prominent record of a new church was usually the order for its construction, the later acceptance of the finished church by the vestry, if recorded at all, receiving only the scantiest mention.

The records already quoted prove the existence at Warrosquyoake of a parish organization and population adequate for the construction of a permanent church there in 1632, but the erection of so large and elaborate a building as the Old Brick Church at so early a period is considered incredible by many students. On the basis of our knowledge of the crudity of most Virginia churches built in the first quarter century of settlement, the production of so substantial a structure in 1632 would appear most improbable, were it not that a closely similar, if slightly smaller, church is believed to have been built at Jamestown, less than a decade later.

The improbability is still further reduced by Mr. H. C. Forman's recent discovery that the Governor's Castle, a massive brick structure twice as large as the Old Brick Church, was erected at St. Mary's, Maryland, in 1639, at a much earlier stage of settlement than is represented by the date 1632 in Virginia²⁰. Furthermore, compared to other surviving colonial church structures, the Old Brick Church was of moderate size, and aside from the elaboration inherent in its Gothic design, it is essentially a plain and simple building.

The most serious objection to the tradition of the Old Brick Church's antiquity is that its acceptance involves the complete rejection of an associated tradition, equally as strong and long-standing, that this church was built by Colonel Joseph Bridger. Since the Colonel Joseph Bridger, whose grave is marked by a tombstone in the chancel of the old church, was born in 1628 and was therefore a child when it traditionally was built, the builder is usually identified as his father, said to have been Captain Joseph Bridger.²¹ This substitution cannot be accepted as a valid one, for Colonel Bridger's father was named Samuel, and he is not known to have come to Virginia at all, nor has any evidence been found that the Bridger family was in Isle of Wight prior to 1657²².

²⁰ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XXII, 136.

²¹ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 305.

²² Boddie, *17th Century Isle of Wight*, 423.

Both Colonel Bridger and his wife, Hester Pitt, were related to the Driver family in Gloucestershire, England, before coming to Virginia. There is a strong tradition in the Driver family of Isle of Wight County that some of its members were brought to Virginia by Colonel Bridger to build the Old Brick Church. This tradition appears to be supported by the presence in the old church's brick work of the initials "C. D." and "T. D.", believed to be those of Charles and Thomas Driver. These initials are deeply cut into the right-hand front quoins of the church tower near the top of its southwest corner, and are whitened with cement, in accordance with colonial practice. The location is quite inaccessible from the ground and these inscriptions are clearly original with the church, of which the tower is undoubtedly an integral part and not a later addition.

This Driver tradition increases the difficulty of accepting 1632 as the date of the church's erection, since Thomas and Charles Driver are shown by the county records to have reached manhood in the last quarter of the seventeenth century and, like the Bridgers, the Driver family cannot be proved to have been in Isle of Wight before 1657²³.

Among the few county records referring to a church in the Lower Parish of Isle of Wight is a deed which appears to indicate that a church was in service at this site as early as 1638, tending to confirm the traditional building of a church for the parish in 1632, although it does not prove that this church was the present building. In this deed, dated 9th January, 1667, John Vallentine, Jr., confirms to Mr. John Marshall a tract of land originally sold to Marshall by Vallentine's father, in a deed of 13th January, 1638, and described as "100 acres, lying Southerly on the Creek & Northerly into the woods . . . & soe running downewards to the head of the Creek that leadeth to the then Church", with some additional area bounded on "the deep Swamp."²⁴

The final detail of this description seems to identify this as the site sold on 6th September, 1683, by Michael Fulgham of the Lower Parish of Isle of Wight to its churchwardens and vestrymen and described as "one Acre of Land . . . scituate in the Lower parish whereon the Churchhouse now stands by the Deep Swamp".²⁵ Since

²³ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 365 (Patent of Giles Driver).

²⁴ *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds, 1662-1715*, I, 121.

²⁵ *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds, 1661-1719*, II, 569.

the Old Brick Church is located at the head of Jones' Creek, which is swampy for most of its upper length and passes the churchyard through a ravine twenty feet deep, now dammed to form a pond, there is no apparent reason to doubt that these descriptions refer to its site. This seems to be confirmed by a deed of 1799, in which Brewer Godwin conveys to his son Brewer, Jr., 150 acres of land "between the main road that leads from the said Brewer Godwin to the Brick Church, and a swamp called the deep swamp."²⁶

From the record quoted above, it appears that the Old Brick Church's site was not deeded to the parish until fifty years after its traditional date of erection. This does not directly disprove the old church's reputed antiquity, since the same Lower Parish vestry did not secure any deed to the site of their first chapel until fifty-four years after its probable construction date, while the site of the New Poquoson Church of 1636, in York County, was not deeded to the parish until 1688, after fifty-two years had elapsed. Indirectly, it has greater significance, for in both the cases just quoted, the making of a deed was prompted by the completion of a new church on the old site, and this is accordingly apt to have been true in this case also.

Since the Bridger-Driver traditions and the recorded deeding of the site all point to a later date than the traditional one, it seems probable that the Old Brick Church was completed by Charles and Thomas Driver, as master workmen, under the direction of Colonel Joseph Bridger, about 1682, and that it succeeded an earlier brick church built on the same site, about 1632, as recorded in the lost first vestry book of the parish. The probability that a Gothic colonial church would be constructed in 1682, so long after the construction at Jamestown of the only previously known example of such a church, has been greatly enhanced by the recent discovery that the second Bruton Church of 1683 was also of Gothic design.²⁷

The excellent set of plans of the Old Brick Church, prepared for the National Park Service's survey of historic American buildings, reveals that the old church measures about sixty feet six inches by twenty-four feet three inches, inside the upper walls, which are laid in rough Flemish bond, without glazed headers, and are 26 inches thick, resting on 36-inch foundations. The tower is about twenty feet square, outside, with walls nearly 30 inches thick. It seems evident from early pictures of the church that the base of the tower was treated

²⁶ *Isle of Wight County Deeds*, XVIII, 365.

²⁷ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XIX, 175.

as a porch and left open, the only doors at the west entrance being fitted in the doorway leading from tower to church. It is also apparent from these pictures that the primitive triangular pediment above the west tower doorway was an original detail of the building, and enclosed a panel of white cement, since replaced by a marble tablet commemorating the old church's restoration.

The only recorded detail of the original interior arrangement is found in a vestry order of 8th November, 1746, "that the corner Pew of the Chancel in the Brick Church be allotted for the Wife's of the Justices and Vestrymen of the said Parish, and the Pew that they formerly set in be allotted for the Young Women". A photograph of the ruined interior of the church, taken before the fall of its roof and used to illustrate a publication of 1890, shows that the original west gallery was supported by a massive beam, placed just east of the last window at that end of the church, and that this gallery extended the full width of the church.²⁸ The only original furnishings in the church are believed to be the wine-glass pulpit and its sounding-board, both of which were found in an old barn at Macclesfield and restored in 1894.

After at least a century and a half of service as the parish church of the Lower or Newport Parish, the Old Brick Church was renamed "St. Luke's Church" in 1828, by the Reverend W. G. H. Jones, a young deacon who had been holding missionary services in the old building for three years, following the general period of religious inactivity after the Revolution and the War of 1812.²⁹ This new name occurs only in the reports made to the diocesan convention by Deacon Jones, who was merely following the prevailing fashion of giving saints' names to the old colonial churches. Since the title thus given to the church was never validated either by action of the vestry or by use in the consecration of the church (as in some other similar cases) it has no historical basis and should not, properly, be applied to this ancient structure.

The nineteenth-century vestry book of the parish, opening in 1836, refers to this church as "the Old Brick Church" or "the Old Isle of Wight Church", and the name "St. Luke's Church" does not occur at all in this book, until revived at the restoration of the old building nearly sixty years later. Under the circumstances, the name "St. Luke's Church", attached to the venerable Newport Parish Church

²⁸ Reprinted in *Newport News Daily Press*, Feb. 11, 1940.

²⁹ Hawks, *Convention Journals of Diocese of Virginia*, 220.

during the last four years of its long term of active service, deserves no more recognition than the name "St. David's Church", similarly applied to historic Bruton Church in the last century and still to be seen on one of its older prayer books.

Upon the construction of Christ Church at Smithfield, five miles to the north, in 1832, the Old Brick Church was abandoned and left to decay, although the vestry ordered that effectual measures be taken to secure the structure against intruders. Since Bishop Meade, writing in 1857, records that the deserted building's interior was already completely gutted, it is evident that the measures taken were not effectual. After half a century of utter neglect, the old parish church's roof fell in, one stormy night in 1886, and carried down with it a large part of the east gable.

Restoration of the historic building was at once undertaken by the Reverend David Barr, then Rector of Christ Church, who continued to raise money for the project for several years after his resignation of the parish in 1889. The work was sufficiently advanced to permit monthly services to be held in 1890, but was not completed until four years later. Further improvement of the building was carried out some fifteen years ago.

An interesting feature of the restoration of the Old Brick Church was the replacement of the bricks destroyed through the roof's collapse, by about two thousand bricks from the ruins of the last colonial church at Jamestown. In order to incorporate in the restored building as much as possible of its original material, the new chancel railing was made out of wood from the framework of the fallen roof. Many gifts were received during the restoration, the most notable being the superb stained glass window in the chancel, presented by Queen Victoria of England.³⁰

The old building has never resumed its original status as the parish church of Newport, but occasional services are still held there. It is now maintained by voluntary contributions, under the care of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, and its ancient churchyard, filled with large old trees and fine boxwood, furnishes a setting of appropriate beauty and distinction.

At the division of the county into two parishes in 1643, the boundary between them was set at Pagan Creek, then called Pagan Point Creek, after the marshy point just north of the inner mouth of this

³⁰ Wallington, *Historic Churches of America*, 98.

creek, which emptied into Warrosquyoake Bay, often called the Lower Bay, to distinguish it from the present Burwell's Bay, further up the shore of James River. As long as settlement extended only a few miles inland from the river, this boundary was sufficient, but later on, it was extended up the creek to the present wharf at Smithfield, then along the existing Court-house Road to Blackwater Bridge, and on to the upper limits of the original county, by a straight line parallel to the boundary dividing it from the adjoining county of Surry.³¹

It seems certain that a church was built for the Upper Parish of Isle of Wight, soon after its formation in 1643, but no record of its construction has been found. This first Upper Parish Church appears to have been the one mentioned in the will of Robert Pitt, dated 6th June, 1672, and proved a year and a half later. In this will, Robert Pitt bequeaths, as a gift from his deceased wife, Martha Pitt, "one pcell of land . . . that Joyneth uppon the north side of the land w^{ch} was M^r John Swards for the length, And the breadth towards the church . . . uppon which land my Executor is to build one howse . . . which said land & howseinge is to be for the releiffe of Poore Women".³²

A further reference to the same church's site is found in a deed of 11th January, 1675, in which James Day of London conveys to William Webb of Isle of Wight "100 acres for life, bounded on the south side of swamp, Northerly towards head of the valley near the Old Church Yard—then a line for the river side".³³ The land involved in this deed was a part of James Day's plantation at Day's Point, just north of the mouth of Pagan Creek, and the church site evidently was near the James River shore. The reference to this church's site as "the Old Church Yard" clearly implies that the church itself was no longer in service, but the earlier record suggests that the old building, although abandoned, was still standing.

In conjunction with the boundaries given in this deed, the description quoted from Robert Pitt's will of 1672 definitely locates this church site as lying just east of the head of Seward's Creek (now Williams' Creek) and about a quarter mile inland from the south shore of Burwell's Bay, as shown on Plate 43. This is evident from the fact that "the land which was John Seward's" can be identified

³¹ Purdie, *History of Isle of Wight*, MS. filed at Isle of Wight Courthouse

³² *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds, 1661-1719*, II, 128.

³³ *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds, 1662-1715*, I, 350.

from early land patents as the neck on the north side of Pagan Creek, lying between Goose Hill Creek (now Tormentor Creek) and Seward's Creek and running up to their heads.³⁴

This tract is mentioned as "the Levie Neck" in an act appointing tobacco-viewers for Pagan Creek in January, 1639/40, and has been known as the Levy Neck ever since.³⁵ The name suggests that this was the place where the county commissioners met to lay the annual levy for the upper part of the county, in the earliest period of the County's existence.

The Levy Neck was sold by Seward in 1672 to William Bressie, a Quaker,³⁶ who in 1679 made a deed of gift conveying to "the serv^{ts} of God frequently called Quakers, one house built by the said people in the place called the Levy Neck Ould feilds near the Creek side to worshp & serve the liveing God in spiritt & truth, with ground sufficient for a Graveyard . . . bounded by four Corner Trees to be planted, with a free egress and regress for the sd people through any of the sd Bressie's land in any path that now leads to the House".³⁷ William Bressie's will, dated 22nd January, 1699/1700, and proved a year later, leaves much tobacco "towards the maintaining and upholding of the meeting House of the people of God called Quakers . . . being at Levy Necke" and for the care of their poor.³⁸

Although the Quakers held meetings at the house of William Yarrett at Levy Neck as early as 1663,³⁹ these meetings were not sanctioned by the county authorities, who imprisoned those responsible for them, hence the building of the meeting-house probably did not antedate Bressie's acquisition of its site in 1672. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the Quaker faith was not fully established in this region until after the visit of its founder, George Fox, in that year.

Because the "old fields" mentioned in such early deeds were the first clearings made by the colonists, they were usually located close to the river landings and not back in the woods, hence this meeting-house "near the Creek side" probably stood on the high shore of Pagan Creek at the south end of the neck, but its actual site has not been located. Like other early meeting-houses in this section, whose speci-

³⁴ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 439.

³⁵ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), V, 24.

³⁶ *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds, 1662-1715*, I, 277.

³⁷ *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds, 1662-1715*, I, 423.

³⁸ *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds, 1661-1719*, II, 432.

³⁹ Boddie, *17th Century Isle of Wight*, 116.

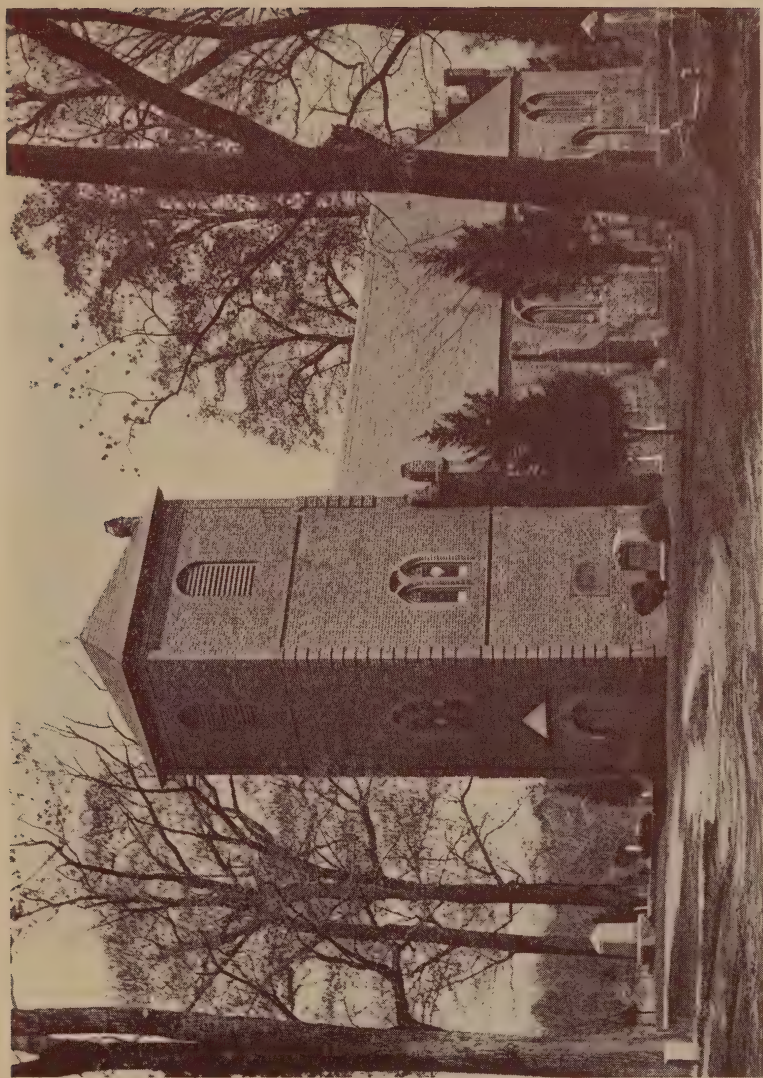


PLATE 42.

Old Brick Church, Isle of Wight County.

fications are given in Quaker records, it was doubtless a small frame building of the simplest type, set on wooden blocks, so that no trace of a foundation could be expected to show at its site.

It is apparent that the church mentioned in the records already quoted could not have been the Levy Neck Meeting-house, built in 1672 or later, because a site previously in use for only two or three years would not have been described as "the Old Church Yard", and Quaker houses of worship were never called churches in colonial records. It is further evident that the church site in question was not on the Levy Neck, at all, but lay a mile and a half from the probable location of the meeting-house.

The replacement of this first Upper Parish Church, either because it was inconveniently located or of a crude and temporary type of construction, appears to have been contemplated as early as 1655. This is revealed by a bequest made by George Hardy, owner of the ancient mill at the head of Lawne's Creek, whose will, dated and proved in the spring of that year, leaves "One Thousand pounds of Tob^o towards the Building of the Church in this parish in case it be built with Brick."⁴⁰

It appears that this second Upper Parish Church was not "built with Brick", so as to secure the benefit of Mr. Hardy's bequest, since a deposition of 9th August, 1664, shows that it was a frame building erected in the previous year. The same record further reveals that at least one colonial church builder was not above taking advantage of the church warden who had hired him, by keeping some of the extra material for his own use.

In this deposition, the builder's servant, Daniel Miles, testifies "That the last Sumer in the year 1663 this depon^t liveing att the house of John Askew, he the sd Askew was imployed to build the Church by Cap^t Henry Pitt and after it was built, this dep^t was requested by John Askew, with the said Askew's Cart and Oxen, to fetch some Slabbs and Tobaccoe Sticks, as the said Askew said, and rounding into a thickett near the Church, he did there see a Pcell of boards covered with Bowes [boughs], Askew saying that they were Boards that he had saved out of the Cap^{ts} Timber . . . further saying that he had the most right to them . . . and after the Cart was loaded to the full he ledd the Oxen . . . to the Woods near his own fence & their unloaded the said boards."⁴¹

⁴⁰ *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds, 1662-1715*, I, 576.

⁴¹ *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds*, I, 14.

The fact that the second Upper Parish Church was completed by its builder within less than a year not only confirms its being of frame construction, as suggested by mention of timber and boards as its materials, but also indicates that it was a small building of the simplest type, hence no foundation remains could be expected to be evident at its site.

The additional fact that this church was constructed on the land of its builder is brought out in a deed of 1st February, 1666, which also defines its location. In this deed, John Askew conveys to John Watson 50 acres of land "Commonly called the Church feild & being in the Isle of Wight County and bounded between the two Main Branches of Pagan Creek & Joyning upon the Land once Philip Dewells on the North West Side . . . & running [along] the bottom of a Swamp on the East North East Side Adjoining the Land of the said Askew".⁴² The significance of this reference lies in the fact that in colonial records the term "Church feild" is regularly used to denote the site of a church.

A conveyance of 1665 for the land "once Philip Dewell's", adjoining this early church site, shows that Dewell's property lay on the west side of Pagan Creek,⁴³ opposite a tract of 750 acres, patented by John Sparkes in 1635, "at the head of Pagan point Creek, butting Northerly upon land of M^r Jones, Southerly upon the white marsh, West upon the river [i. e., Pagan Creek] & Easterly into the woods a mile". The "M^r Jones" mentioned in Sparkes' patent was Anthony Jones, who, in the same year, patented 500 acres, just north of Sparkes' grant and on the same side of the creek, extending upward to the Cross Creek (about a mile below the present Wrenn's Mill).⁴⁴ Since Jones' land also ran a mile into the woods, the combined area of the two grants is sufficient to extend two miles along the creek, placing Sparkes' lower boundary just north of the present town of Smithfield, on the opposite side of the creek, and "the white marsh", given as this boundary, is clearly the marshy neck across from the town.

For the final location of the church site, there only remains to be identified the second of "the two Main Branches of Pagan Creek", between which "the Church feild" lay, the first branch being the creek itself. A deed of 1663 from John Bond to Thomas Harris, for

⁴² *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds, Guardian's Accounts*, A, 75.

⁴³ *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds, 1662-1715*, I, 66.

⁴⁴ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 27.

the "Corne Mill at the head of Pagan Creek",⁴⁵ identifies this second main branch as the present Mount Holly Creek, on which this mill is known to have stood, since it reveals that this creek was once regarded as a part of Pagan Creek and not merely as one of its tributaries. This mill is proved to have been the one later known as Chapman's Mill, which stood at the dam forming the present Smithfield Waterworks reservoir (originally a colonial millpond called the Cypress Swamp), at the head of Mount Holly Creek, by a chain of title deeds to the mill property. These deeds include the one already quoted, from Bond to Harris, a deed of 1667 from Harris to Giles Driver⁴⁶ and another of 1717, from Driver to John Pitt,⁴⁷ all for this same mill, which is devised in John Pitt's will, dated 1729, as his "mill on Court House Creek."⁴⁸

Since an early court-house for Isle of Wight county is believed to have stood on the south bank of the present Mount Holly Creek, a mile west of Smithfield, this completes the evidence establishing "the Church feild's" location. The swamp bordering it on the east north-east must then have been the present Blair's Creek, placing the church site half a mile north of that of the court-house, in the narrow neck between Blair's and Mount Holly Creeks, as shown in Plate 43.

This early court-house stood on what has always been called the Glebe Farm, and the proximity of the church's site, as deduced above, both to the parish land and the county courts, corroborates our conclusions, since church, court and glebe usually were closely associated in early colonial times. In view of this fact, there is little reason to doubt that this court-house was constructed at about the same time as the church. Since the latter was built only four years after separate courts for the two parishes had been abolished in 1659, it is not unreasonable to conclude that this court-house was the first one erected for the original county of Isle of Wight.

When settlement of the county had been extended to the upper regions of its original territory, the location of this court-house became inconvenient and, upon complaint by the outlying settlers, the General Assembly of 1736 ordered a new court-house to be built on the north side of the present Blackwater Bridge, 4½ miles south of Zuni, and the former court-house to be discontinued.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds, 1662-1715*, I, 13.

⁴⁶ *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds, 1662-1715*, I, 116.

⁴⁷ *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds, 1661-1719*, II, 114.

⁴⁸ *Isle of Wight County Records*.

⁴⁹ *McIlwaine, Executive Journals of Council, 1721-39*, IV, 167, 332.

In this same year, the abandoned court building near Pagan Creek was purchased by Henry Wiggs, a carpenter, and given by him to the Quakers for use as a meeting-house.⁵⁰ Wiggs was one of the original members of the Levy Neck Meeting, already mentioned, but he lived near the old court-house, and the new congregation formed through his efforts became known as the Pagan Creek Meeting. Occasional earlier mentions of a meeting of this name, in the Quaker records, are believed to refer to the Levy Neck Meeting, which was also on Pagan Creek.

When the original Isle of Wight County was divided at the Blackwater River to form Southampton County in 1749, the new court-house of 1736 was left standing on the frontier of the older county's reduced area. This location was so inconvenient that a writ was obtained from Governor Gooch, dated 11th May, 1749, adjourning the Isle of Wight County court "to the place called the Quakers Meeting House, formerly the old Court House", and the county records were ordered transferred to this building.⁵¹ It is not recorded how the Quakers were dispossessed of their meeting-house, to which a legal title had been given them, but their ouster appears to have ended the active existence of this meeting, even though the old court building was no longer used by the county after the new court-house at Smithfield was completed in 1752.

Another colonial Quaker congregation in Isle of Wight was the Terrascoe Neck Meeting, whose meeting-house stood at the eastern end of the county in the neck of land between Brewer's Creek and Ragged Island Creek. This was the Terrascoe Neck, which, together with the Ragged Islands, was transferred from Nansemond to Isle of Wight county in 1657 "for the greater conveniency" of the inhabitants.⁵² Reference to the road leading to this Quaker house of worship, as "the Meeting house path", is found in a deed of 1717, for land in the Lower Parish, near Brewer's Creek.⁵³

A reference in a will of 1687 to "the cart path that goeth from . . . Collonell Bacon's plantation up towards the Church" suggests that the Upper Parish Church of 1663 was still in service at that date. This reference is definitely associated with this church by the fact that the will was made by Thomas Pitt, son and heir of Captain

⁵⁰ *Isle of Wight County Deeds, 1736-41, V, 13.*

⁵¹ *Isle of Wight County Orders, 1746-52, 13.*

⁵² Hening, *Statutes at Large, I, 423.*

⁵³ *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds, 1715-24, III, 106.*

Henry Pitt, and that the land bounded by this early road was part of John Sparkes' grant of 1635, opposite the church, and abutted on Colonel Nathaniel Bacon's original grant of 1652.⁵⁴ A probable reference to this same road, the forerunner of the present U. S. Route 10, is found in the will of Nicholas Hill, dated and proved in 1675, which mentions "the cart path that goes from the Mill belonging to M^r George Hardy, towards the Church."⁵⁵

No record of the replacement of this second church has been found, but the only vestry book still in existence for the Upper Parish, opening in 1723, contains frequent references to construction work on a parish church building which is later identified as the Bay Church. This traditionally occupied a site three and a half miles north of the church of 1663, and three quarters of a mile from Burwell's Bay, near the intersection of the present U. S. Route 10 with the cross road leading to Wrenn's Mill.

The fact that the contractor for this work, Mr. Peter Woodward, was put under bond for its completion by a specified date, as was usual when a colonial church was built or enlarged, the large amount levied and paid "To M^r Wooddard for the Church", and the liberal allowance of time for performance of the contract, all suggest that these entries record the final payment for a new parish church or for a major addition to an older one. Since the vestry book tells of an addition to this church in 1732, this disposes of the probability that enlargement of an old building was involved and it seems possible that the third Upper Parish Church was accepted by the vestry soon after the last of March, 1725, as specified.

On the other hand, we have a report by the Reverend Alexander Forbes, rector of the Upper Parish, to the Bishop of London, in 1724, which makes no mention of the building of a new parish church,⁵⁶ although an accompanying letter from the rector mentions that a chapel had been under construction by the parish for several years past, but still lay unfinished.⁵⁷ It nevertheless seems possible that the financial stringency revealed by this letter had already caused an unfinished parish church to be placed in service, prior to the date of this report. The supposition that this parish church of 1724 was not finally completed until a year later is upheld by a vestry order of 7th July,

⁵⁴ *Isle of Wight County Wills, Deeds, 1661-1719*, II, 283.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 133.

⁵⁶ Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 327.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 329.

1725, ordering two additional windows to be cut in its walls, since an exactly similar change was made in the unfinished chapel of the parish at its final completion.

The same financial stringency had perhaps caused the building of a church too small for the parish's needs, which may account for its enlargement by an addition ordered 15th October, 1731, and accepted a year later, at a cost of 10,000 pounds of tobacco. Since no mention is made of a wing, it is likely that this was an addition to the church at the chancel end, and an accompanying levy of 2000 pounds of tobacco "for Planck for the Church" strongly suggests that the Upper Parish Church was a frame building. Like the church itself, the chancel addition was evidently pressed into service before completion, since the contractor for both the church and addition, Peter Woodward, was paid 7000 pounds of tobacco in 1737 to install a chancel doorway and a platform for the communion table, besides providing a cornice and new shingles for the entire roof.

Upon the dissolution of the Upper Parish in 1734, through the union of its lower portion with Newport Parish and of its upper portion with the new parish of Nottoway, its old vestry book was continued as the vestry record for Newport Parish, which had now become coterminous with the reduced Isle of Wight County. At the beginning of the new record, the former Upper and Newport Parish Churches were distinguished as "the Church" and "the Brick Church"; then as "the Upper Church" and "the Church"; and after 1747, as "the Bay Church" and "the Brick Church." These churches became the Upper and Lower Churches of Newport Parish, and both were repaired and their churchyards railed in, between 1744 and 1747.

Although there are irregular entries dated as late as 1770, in the back of the vestry book, the regular record closes in 1754, without any mention of the replacement of the Bay Church, but it is believed to have been succeeded by a large brick church, built on an adjoining site and known by the same name. According to Bishop Meade, this last Bay Church, the second Upper Church of Newport Parish, was built about the middle of the eighteenth century, but the lack of any record of its erection, before the close of the regular vestry book in 1754, indicates that it could not have been completed much before 1760.

The Bishop further relates that it was built on the lands of Colonel Nathaniel Burwell, but that "About the year 1810, the estate came into other hands; the church was pulled down and a kitchen built

of the bricks; the sides and backs of the pews were used to make stalls for a stable and divisions in a barn, which was last struck by lightning and burned down. The bell of the church was exchanged in Richmond for a brandy-still."⁵⁸

Remains of both Bay Churches are evident at the site, which is now covered with large trees and dense undergrowth. The back-filled trenches left by the removal of the later church's foundation, although obscured by the presence of a modern graveyard, indicate that it was a large and massive building, perhaps eighty by forty feet, over all. The earlier church lay in the southern part of the grove, nearer to the cross road, and its remains, although not well-defined, suggest that it was a wooden building of moderate size.

The report made to the Bishop of London in 1724 by the Reverend Thomas Bayley, rector of Newport Parish,⁵⁹ states that this parish then had in service a chapel of ease in the upper part of the parish and nineteen miles distant from the mother church. This chapel is believed to have been built as a result of the benefaction of a pious philanthropist, Captain Hugh Campbell, who, in 1692, gave 200 acres of land to support a reader to conduct services for "the Inhabitants att Blackwater in Isle of Wight County", who, "Liveing att great Distances from any Churches or Chapels very Seldome have opportunity to bee att the publick worship of God".⁶⁰ The site of this chapel lies 2½ miles northwest of the present town of Windsor and a quarter mile south of the intersection of the highway with the Norfolk and Western Railway.

This chapel became the first Lower Chapel of the enlarged Newport Parish in 1734. Ten years later, the vestry ordered to be built near the old chapel a new frame chapel, fifty by twenty-four feet in size, set on blocks of heart cypress, with sills of lightwood pine and framing of sawed oak. Its specification called for the interior, for "the height of the Peughs [pews] to be . . . Windscoated with Plank, the remaind' of the Inside to be lathd & Plastered with a Compass Sealing, a Galeary with bannesters . . . in one End of Eight foot height and 12 foot floor the Weadth of the Ch[urch], also three windows of Each Side and one in the End of Six foot Height and Three foot Wedth . . . with Pannel'd Dore and Cornish'd Eaves and Every Other Particular that's Usefull Necessary or Fashionable for such Ch.

⁵⁸ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 301.

⁵⁹ Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 274.

⁶⁰ *Lower Norfolk Antiquary*, I, 65.

or Chapel to have done." The older chapel was then sold at public auction.

Since the new chapel stood on the land of John and Nathan Pierce, it is mentioned in the county records as "Pearce's Chapel".⁶¹ By the vestry's orders, a deed to the site was obtained from the Pierces at the time of the second chapel's completion in 1746,⁶² but the sale of part of their lands to Thomas Jones made it desirable for him to give a new deed to the chapel site on the 12th January, 1748/9.⁶³

The second Lower Chapel fell into disuse after the Revolution and was finally taken over by the Christian Church of the South, after occasional use by their missionary preachers.⁶⁴ It was burned in 1827, "no doubt by the hands of an incendiary", as reported to the Episcopal Church Convention of that year by the Reverend W. G. H. Jones, a young minister then doing missionary work in the parish, to which he claimed it still belonged.⁶⁵ The burning of this colonial church building is also reported by Bishop Meade, who refers to it as the Isle of Wight Chapel.⁶⁶ The old chapel was replaced on the same site in 1828 by a new Christian church which received the name Antioch. This church has been rebuilt several times since that date and is still in use by the same denomination.

The letter accompanying the report of 1724, by the rector of the Upper Parish, states that "Our Chapel hath lain unfinished for some years bygone consisting as yet only of walls and Roof". This chapel was finally completed by the 4th of July, 1726, when the vestry book records that two more windows were cut in its walls, the barge boards added at the gable ends and the structure well tarred all over. Final payment to the contractor for the building was made on the 27th December in the same year. The site of this chapel has not been located. It was the Lower Chapel of the parish.

When the Upper Parish was dissolved in 1734, this chapel became the first Upper Chapel of Newport Parish. It was lengthened 16 feet at the chancel end in 1742 and furnished with a new communion table, the whole building being re-shingled, set up on new blocks and provided with new benches and steps. In spite of all this outlay, the

⁶¹ *Isle of Wight County Orders, 1746-52*, 13.

⁶² *Isle of Wight County Deeds, 1744-47*, VII, 387.

⁶³ *Isle of Wight County Deeds, 1747-52*, VIII, 195.

⁶⁴ Morrison, *History of Isle of Wight*, 64.

⁶⁵ Hawks, *Convention Journals of Diocese of Virginia*, 201.

⁶⁶ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 301.

old chapel soon had to be replaced, and on 24th November, 1748, it was "Order'd that a New Chapel be built near the old Chapel—Fifty foot Long and Twenty four foot wide to be sett on good sound Cypress Blocks . . . to be done by the cheapest undertakers for either Brick or Wood". It is not recorded which material was used for the new building and its further history is lost.

In the report of 1724, already quoted, it is stated by the rector of the Upper Parish that "In our Church, Divine Service is performed twice in three weeks and at one chapel distant XXIII Miles once in 3 weeks. In remote parts of the parish once in four weeks". The Upper Parish vestry book identifies these "remote parts" in an order of 31st October, 1724, "that Jo^s perry Read to the people of over Nottoway River att Will^m Blakes and petersons on the Sabath Day".

The vestry book records the first proposal for a chapel of ease at one of the reading places mentioned above, in an order dated 19th July, 1731, "That upon the petition of the outward Inhabitants of this parrish for A Chappell that Notis be Given to Any person that will undertake this Building to Repair to a Vestry held the twenty-fifth day of August next to Agree for the performance thereof." At the meeting thus announced, the vestry and inhabitants agreed that "the outward Chappell" should be built at William Blake's plantation, to be "40 foot in Length 24 in Breadth and 10 foot pitched, to be weatherboarded wth good feather Edged planke, Gable ends the same Covered wth shingles upon Laths—Ceiled with plank wth Communion Table and pews and a Gallary with ffive windows pitch 5 foot . . . with 2 doors." Final payment was made to the builder of the chapel, Major John Simmons, on 25th October, 1733, and it was then "Ordered that the Reader in the outer parts Read at the Chappell every Sabath Day", indicating its acceptance by the vestry.

This Outward Chapel of 1733 is believed to have been the building mentioned in the earliest Southampton County records as the Angelica Chapel, from its location on Angelica Creek, near its junction with Three Creek.⁶⁷ Since the Angelica Chapel lay beyond Nottoway River, it fell into the new parish of St. Luke's, which was cut off from Nottoway Parish in 1762.

Passing out of service after the Revolution, the old building disappeared long ago, and the site was placed under cultivation, after the Civil War, by a farmer whose field cornered at the old church-

⁶⁷ *Southampton County Orders, 1749-54, I, 427.*

yard. The probability that it was the first chapel built west of the Nottoway River, in what is now Southampton County, is supported by the fact that it gave its name to the Chapel Road, an early highway leading across this county past the chapel's site and now known as the Emporia Road.

This pioneer chapel, having been constructed by Major John Simmons, appears to have been the building mentioned as Simmons' Church by Bishop Meade, who states that there were seven churches in the two colonial parishes of Southampton, including one built through the efforts of the Reverend Henry John Burges, rector of both parishes during the Revolution. The Bishop names only five of these churches, as Lecock, Jones', Oberry's, Simmons' and Millfield.⁶⁸ The two not named appear to have been Vick's Church and Flower's Church, the former being in use by the Methodists at the time the Bishop wrote his book. Existing records show that the first name listed by the Bishop is erroneous and should properly be Seacock. Jones' Church has not been identified as a Southampton church, but may have been the Isle of Wight Chapel, built on Thomas Jones' land in 1746.

The Upper Parish chapel, described in the report of 1724 as lying 23 miles from the parish church, is identified as Seacock Chapel by a processioning order for that year, recorded in the old vestry book. The bounds given in this vestry order, for the lands processioned, "from the Chapel up Seacock to the ridge and so from Blackwater to the main road", suggests that this chapel stood on Seacock Swamp, midway between Blackwater River and the ancient highway, still in service through the old village of Berlin and the modern town of Ivor. County court orders of 1755-58, in connection with the construction of a "bridge over Seacock at the old chapple",⁶⁹ definitely locate this chapel at one of the crossings over the creek, and an order of 1804 describes this bridge as the "Middle Seacock Bridge" and places "the church" at its east end.⁷⁰ Since the same order mentions the bridge as consisting of several spans and a causeway, reference to the county map identifies the road which passes over it as State Route 614, leading from Berlin to the present Zuni. The probable site of the chapel has long been in use as a sand pit, but a few old bricks are still visible there.

⁶⁸ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 308.

⁶⁹ *Southampton County Orders, 1754-59*, II, 129.

⁷⁰ *Southampton County Orders, 1803-05*, X, 239.

The territory beyond the Blackwater River was not thrown open to white settlement until the close of the seventeenth century,⁷¹ so that Seacock Chapel could not have been erected prior to 1700, but many references to it as "the old Chapel," in the earliest Southampton County records, suggest that it was built soon after that date. Since it apparently was not included as one of the two Upper Parish chapels, in the Act of 1734, it may have been abandoned for a time, following the completion of the Outward Chapel in the preceding year, but the 1804 order, already quoted, proves that a church was still standing near this bridge at that time. The apparent survival of this ancient chapel for at least seventy years after its original abandonment suggests that it may have been restored to service after the cutting off of St. Luke's Parish in 1762, but no records have been found to confirm this conjecture.

The Act of August, 1734, creating Nottoway Parish out of the upper sections of the consolidated Upper and Newport Parishes, states that each of these parishes had "one church and two chapels, which are very inconvenient, both to the ministers and the people."⁷² Since the parish of Newport, as modified by this Act, acquired only one chapel from each of its component parishes, it follows that the other two chapels mentioned in the Act were cut off with Nottoway Parish.

The chapel thus lost to Newport Parish is clearly the one for which, as stated in this Act, this parish had levied "ten thousand pounds of tobacco for building a new chapel in that part of the parish which will now fall into the parish of Nottoway". That the construction of this chapel had already been started is implied by the Act, in the further requirement "That the Churchwardens of the parish of Newport shall pay to the church-wardens of the parish of Nottoway, the said ten thousand pounds of tobacco or so much thereof as is not already laid out in the said building, for compleating and finishing the same."

The purchase of a site for this chapel is recorded in Brunswick County in the form of a deed of July 29, 1734, from Elizabeth Exum to Newport Parish, for "one acre of land for use by the parish Church or Chapel, said acre being part of a patent of 700 acres granted to William Scott, Jr., June 16th, 1714. Being in Isle of Wight County near Flowers Bridge on the North side of Nottoway River and adjoining Henry Flower."⁷³

⁷¹ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council*, I, 457.

⁷² Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 444.

⁷³ *Brunswick County Deeds*, IV, 365.

Flower's Bridge has been identified as the one which crossed the Nottoway River a few rods south of the present Southampton County Court-house and Clerk's Office. The first courts held for this county after its formation in 1748 were held at the house of Elizabeth Ricks,⁷⁴ near the present village of Ivor, but on the 10th August, 1749, court was adjourned to the house of Exum Scott, near Flower's Bridge, at which Scott maintained a licensed ordinary or tavern.⁷⁵ This adjournment was in keeping with a county court order of 8th June, 1749, that "Elizabeth Exum's land near Flowers Bridge is chosen as the sight upon which to erect the Court House and other public buildings."⁷⁶ The first court was held on 14th June, 1750, in the new court-house which was built on the site ordered.

It is apparent that the projected Newport Parish chapel was taken over and completed by the Nottoway Parish vestry, in compliance with the Act of 1734, as their parish church. The location of the new parish church was evidently satisfactory to the vestry, but not to others in the parish. This is manifest from "a Petition of Divers Inhabitants" of this parish made to the colonial Council on the 1st May, 1735, "complaining of the inconvenient Scituation of the new Church, now building in the said Parish." Since the site chosen by the vestry was sufficiently central in the parish to serve later as the seat of government for the coterminous county of Southampton, the petition was rejected and the church was completed as planned.⁷⁷

The new church's name is given in a Southampton County record of 8th November, 1750, when the grand jury presented the "Overseer of the Highway from Littletown Landing to Flower's Church,"⁷⁸ a title evidently derived from the same source as that of the bridge, since both adjoined the land of Henry Flower. A year later the presentment of "the Overseer of the Road from Little Town to the Church,"⁷⁹ identifies this building as the parish church, since the only other houses of worship hitherto mentioned in the records had been described as chapels and the simple title of "the Church" was usually reserved for the parish church.

Littletown Landing was the Nottoway River wharf near the old Bailey plantation of that name, adjacent to the present village of

⁷⁴ *Southampton County Orders, 1749-54*, I, 6.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 9, 84.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 4.

⁷⁷ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council*, IV, 349.

⁷⁸ *Southampton County Orders, 1749-54*, I, 96.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 181.

Littleton, in the neighboring county of Sussex. The road in question was the forerunner of the later Jerusalem Plank Road, running down the neck between Assamoosick Swamp and the Nottoway River to Courtland, the present county seat of Southampton.

In view of an order of 14th February, 1754, granting Exum Scott "leave to make an aulteration in the road from the court-house to the church",⁸⁰ it is apparent that the site of Flower's Church did not closely adjoin that of the original court-house, which appears to have stood on the same site as the present court building for the county. Since both sites were on Elizabeth Exum's land near Flower's Bridge, it is clear that they were not far apart and that this first Nottoway Parish Church must have stood within the limits of the present town of Courtland or very close to it. The later history of Flower's Church is completely unknown, but it may be presumed that it fell into disuse and ultimate ruin, soon after the Revolution, since its site and even its existence seem to have become completely forgotten by local residents.

Following the cutting off of Nottoway Parish's outlying territory, with the loss of its Outward Chapel, by the formation of St. Luke's Parish in 1762, the Nottoway vestry undertook the construction of a new brick church for the upper part of the reduced parish, in the fork of the Nottoway and Blackwater Rivers.

The purchase of land for the erection of the new church is recorded in a deed of 13th December, 1764, from Joshua Joyner to the vestry of Nottoway Parish, for "two acres . . . for the use of the Inhabitants of the said parish of Nottoway to erect a Church or Chapple thereon . . . and for a yeard adjoining thereto."⁸¹ The new church built on this site appears to have been the one generally known as Oberry's Church, and presumably derived this name from its builder, in accordance with local custom. Being a brick building, it may not have been completed until 1768.

It is traditional that the land across the road from Oberry's Church was the parish glebe. This glebe appears to have been the one purchased by the parish from Daniel Fisher, a month earlier than the acquisition of the church site, and described as "the former plantation of Thomas Gray on a branch of Coshunkoran Swamp," and previously sold by Gray to Fisher in 1761.⁸²

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 451.

⁸¹ *Southampton County Deeds, 1760-67*, III, 322.

⁸² *Ibid.*, III, 100, 299.

Following its abandonment after the Revolution, the old church building was gradually torn down to furnish building material for the neighborhood, and its site is now occupied by a colored Baptist Church of the same name.

From the lack of any reference to Millfield Church in county records of the colonial period, it appears that this was the church built during the Revolution through the efforts of the Reverend Henry John Burges, as mentioned by Bishop Meade. This conclusion is supported by the fact that Millfield Church stood within sight of Mr. Burges' home, also called Millfield from its location below Kello's Mill, at the head of the Lightwood Swamp.

Subsequent to its abandonment by Nottoway Parish some years after the Revolution, Millfield Church was taken over by the Baptists in 1836, and was still standing in 1854, according to Bishop Meade. Soon after this date it was replaced by a new frame church on the opposite side of the existing road, and this in turn was replaced in 1902 by the present Millfield Baptist Church. The colonial church is said to have been a brick building and its site lies in the woods across the road from the present church.

Upon the formation of a new colonial parish, through the subdivision of an older one, the former frontier chapel of the parent organization usually served as the mother church of the new parish, until it became financially able to build churches of its own. For several years after the creation of St. Luke's Parish in 1762, therefore, its parish church must have been the Angelica Chapel, since this was the only church of Nottoway Parish known to have stood within the new parish's territory at that date.

The first steps taken by the vestry of St. Luke's Parish toward the provision of adequate church facilities for their parishioners appear to be recorded in an advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* for 3rd November, 1768, calling for bids on "the building of three wooden churches in the said parish". There is evidence that these churches were actually built, and since two of them are recorded as chapels, it may be assumed that the third was intended to replace the old Angelica Chapel as St. Luke's Parish Church.

This new parish church of 1768 is believed to have been the building whose almost forgotten site lies in the woods, about a mile southwest of Cary's Bridge over Nottoway River, and on the north side of the road to Capron, which branches off from the former Plank Road near the present village of Sebrell. This old church, last known as Oak

Grove Church, was definitely an Episcopal church and therefore almost certainly of colonial origin, since it disappeared so long ago that its site is generally unknown, although it lies only a quarter mile west of the present Applewhite Methodist Church.

The name of the second church built in 1768 for St. Luke's Parish appears to be given as St. George's Chapel by a single record, in which its location is only indefinitely suggested. This record is the will of John Crenshaw of Southampton County, dated 3rd December, 1784, and proved two years later, leaving to his son Elijah a part of his land on Tar Kiln Branch, near "the road leading from Dr. Brown's to St. George's Chapel".⁸³ The place known as Dr. Brown's was the principal ferry over the Nottoway River for the southern section of Southampton and roads leading from this ferry to other colonial churches are mentioned in the county records.

The third of the three wooden churches ordered for St. Luke's Parish, in 1768, was evidently the building known in modern times as Vick's Old Church, which stood for many years on the north side of the county road, about 1¼ miles east of Newsoms and only five miles north of the North Carolina line. The building of this church as a chapel of ease for St. Luke's Parish, about 1768, is confirmed by several county court orders issued in the following year, calling for new roads to be cleared so as to provide more convenient access to the new building. As the site lay near the head of the stream still known as the Cypress Swamp, the chapel is mentioned in one of these orders as "the Cypress Swamp chappel",⁸⁴ but as it also lay on Simon Vick's land, it became better known as Vick's Church.⁸⁵

It was taken over by the Methodists, following a period of disuse after the Revolutionary War, and was finally abandoned over half a century ago, when its congregation moved into a new building more conveniently situated at Newsoms. The old chapel was a frame building with brick underpinning, and was last used as a peanut barn, before finally going to decay. The site lies on top of a small hill and is still marked by a grove of large old oak trees.

There is a persistent local tradition that the present Methodist Church, known as the Nottoway Chapel, occupies the site of a colonial church of that name. The Nottoway Chapel stands on the north side of State Route 611, three eighths of a mile west of Notto-

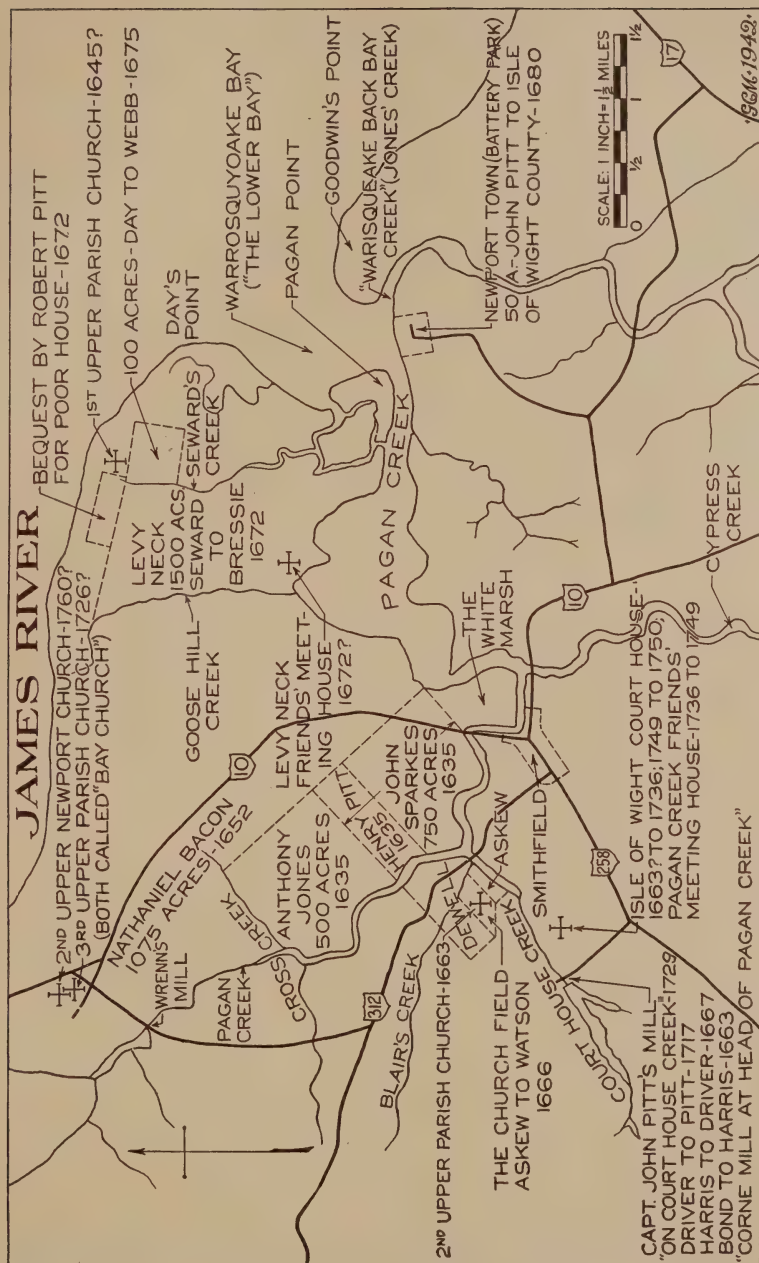
⁸³ *Southampton County Wills*, IV, 210.

⁸⁴ *Southampton County Orders, 1768-72*, V, 177, 190.

⁸⁵ *Southampton County Orders, 1803-05*, X, 120.

way Swamp and $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Courtland. This chapel is a small frame building, whose oldest portion does not conform in size or proportions to the colonial chapels described in the vestry books, and no record has been found, referring to any colonial church of this name, in this location. The Nottoway Chapel's proximity to the parish church built near the court-house at what is now Courtland, as well as to Oberry's Church, only two miles to the east of this Methodist church's site, makes it appear extremely unlikely that there was a colonial church in this location, and the tradition has not been substantiated.

The only colonial Quaker house of worship in Southampton County appears to have been that of the Black Creek Meeting. This meeting-house, a small frame building erected at an unknown date, stood about a mile northeast of the present village of Sedley, on the south side of State Route 611 and just east of its intersection with the road from Jericho School. About 1870, a new frame meeting-house was erected on the site of the original building, which was moved a quarter mile to the west along the south side of the highway, and continued in use as a schoolhouse until about 1886, when it was torn down. The second Black Creek Meeting-house of 1870 was replaced about 1907 by the present meeting-house at Sedley.



Map of historic sites in Isle of Wight County.

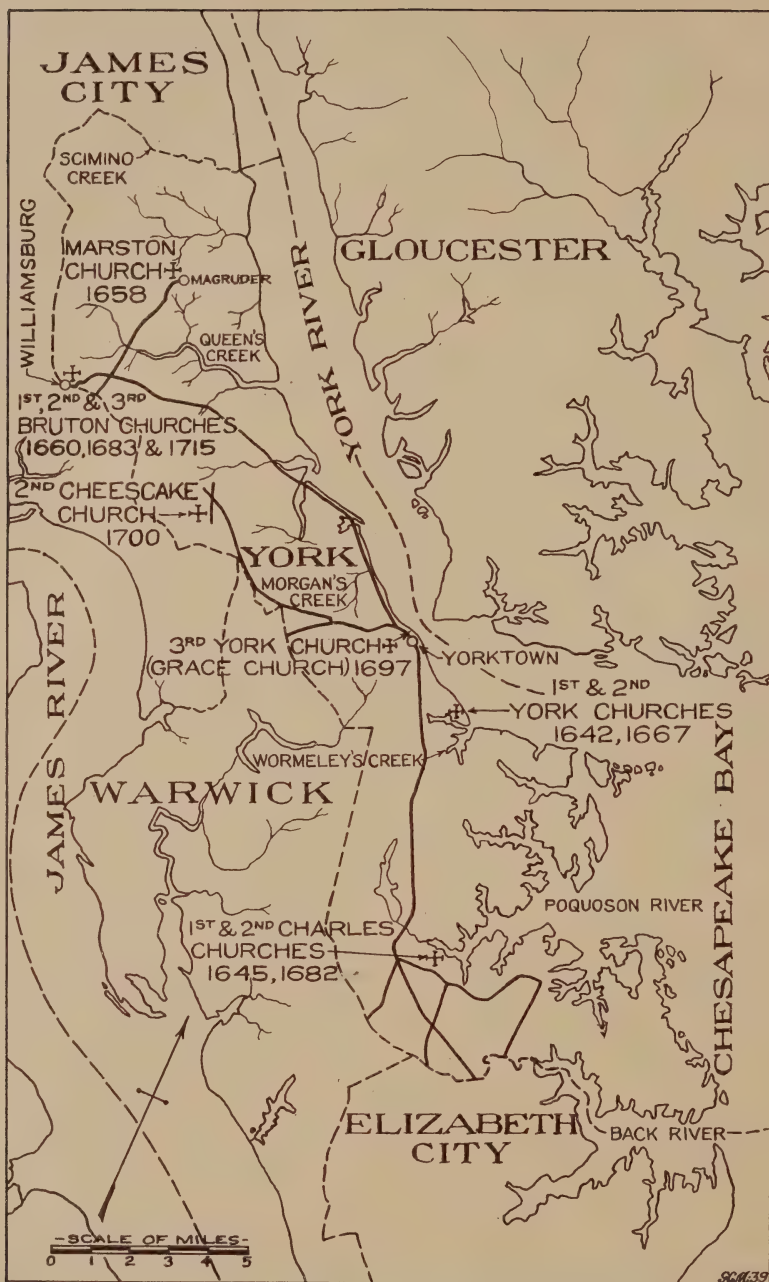


PLATE 44.

Map of York County.

York County Churches

THE STORY OF the colonial churches of York County, Virginia, is of especial interest, because of their location in a region associated with many great events in the colony's history. Study of these ancient York churches is made difficult by the fact that all but two of them have long since disappeared, together with most of their parish records, of which there remain only two registers and no vestry books. This loss is partly offset by the existence of county archives of unusual antiquity, and by extensive publications from vestry records no longer available.

Development of the York River region, forming, as it did, the earliest northern frontier of the Virginia colony, was seriously retarded by the Indian massacre of 1622. As a result, the first settlement on the south side of the river was not made until 1630, when Chiskiack was founded,¹ closely followed by York in 1632,² and by Middle Plantation (later Williamsburg) in 1633.³

As early as 1631, the lower section of the county, under the name of the New Poquoson, had begun to be peopled by the overflow of settlement from Elizabeth City County, then called the Old Poquoson, the word Poquoson being the Indian name for a tract of swampy woods.

The present York county began its official existence in 1634, under the name of Charles River County, as one of the eight original shires into which the colony of Virginia was divided at that time.⁴ Lying on both sides of the river from which it took its name, Charles River County was bounded by the original counties of Elizabeth City on the south and Warwick River and James City on the southwest, while it extended indefinitely toward the northwest and north.

In March, 1642/3, the name of Charles River County was changed to York, as was also that of the river, perhaps to avoid confusion with Charles City County, although the reason is not recorded.⁵ The new title is said to have been given in honor of Prince James, afterwards James II, who was created Duke of York in the above year, but it must have been suggested by the name of the county's principal settle-

¹ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 139.

² Tyler's *Quarterly*, I, 237.

³ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 208.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 224.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 249.

ment, which had been known as York for ten years previous to this date.⁶

The northerly extension of York County was soon limited to the Rappahannock River by the formation of Northumberland County in 1645,⁷ and was still further curtailed by the loss of the area north of York River, through the formation of Lancaster and Gloucester Counties in 1651.⁸ York County acquired its present limits when the territory on both sides of York River, west of Popopotank and Scimino Creeks, was cut off to form New Kent County in 1654.⁹

As in the case of other original shires, it has been assumed that the creation of Charles River County carried with it the establishment of a coterminous parish of the same name.¹⁰ That this was the official view of the colonial government is evident from an act of assembly of 1639, appointing tobacco-viewers for Charles River County, the whole of which was divided into districts "from the lower side of the parish . . . upwards as far as the parish extendeth."¹¹

There is evidence, however, that the unofficial division of the county into parishes had begun some years previous to the above date, although the first official recognition of any such new parish did not occur until the following year. It is apparent that each of the earliest settlements in York County developed independently into a plantation parish, bounded only by the extent of population, with the result that the county was soon divided into five distinct parish organizations.

These five seventeenth-century parishes of York County, with their extents, were as follows: (1) New Poquoson, from Back River to Poquoson River; (2) York, from Poquoson River to Morgan's Creek; (3) Chiskiack, from Morgan's Creek to Queen's Creek;¹² (4) Marston, from Queen's Creek to Scimino Creek, and (5) Middle Plantation, comprising the settlement of that name between Queen's Creek and Archer's Hope Creek (now College Creek) and hence lying partly in James City County.¹³

The origin and development of the five early parishes, into which York County was divided during settlement, may be traced from exist-

⁶ *Tyler's Quarterly*, I, 238.

⁷ Henning, *Statutes at Large*, I, 294.

⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 371.

⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 388.

¹⁰ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 202.

¹¹ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, V, 119.

¹² *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), IV, 155.

¹³ *Tyler's Quarterly*, I, 238.

ing records, although seldom definitely covered by legislative enactment. No enactment forming New Poquoson Parish can be found, but the earliest known record of its existence is dated 1635; its name was later changed, and in 1692 it became Charles Parish. The apparent absence of any enactment forming York Parish may be explained on the basis of its origin as a plantation parish, but it had an inducted minister as early as 1638. Chiskiack Parish is recorded as having had a minister as early as 1635, but was not formally erected as a parish, by act of assembly, until 1640, and its name was changed to Hampton Parish in 1643. The upper part of York County, as it became settled, was formed into the parish of Marston in 1654.

Middle Plantation, at first included in Chiskiack Parish, had become an independent parish some years before 1658, when it was combined with Harrop Parish in James City county to form Middletown Parish. The combination of small parishes into larger ones was carried still further in 1674, when Middletown and Marston Parishes were united to form the present Bruton Parish. The final state of the process was reached in 1706, when York and Hampton Parishes were combined into Yorkhampton Parish, with which Martin's Hundred Parish was united in the year 1712. Throughout most of the eighteenth century, therefore, York County contained only one parish and parts of two others, these three parishes being Charles Parish in the lower section of the county, part of Yorkhampton in the middle, and part of Bruton in the upper section. The development of these parishes will be treated in greater detail later in this chapter.

The most important of the early settlements in the county was York, which was entirely distinct from the later Yorktown. First patented by Sir John Harvey as York Plantation in 1631, York was located just west of Wormeley's Creek, on the south side of the river, and included 750 acres of land, known in modern times as Temple Farm. The county records show that, as early as 1635, court was held at York, where Capt. Robert Baldrey's house was later rented as a court-house, in 1658.¹⁴ Near this early court-house were built the county prison, stocks and pillory in 1661 and York thus became the capital of the county.¹⁵ A year later, a ducking stool was placed at Wormeley's Landing, near the place, on Wormeley's Creek, "where it is supposed the town for York River will be built."¹⁶ That the town of York was actually built

¹⁴ *Tyler's Quarterly*, I, 237, 238.

¹⁵ *York County Deeds, Orders, Wills, 1657-1662*, III, 240.

¹⁶ *Tyler's Quarterly*, I, 237.

in this location is evident from the statement by the historian, Henry Howe, in 1846, that "about a mile and a half below Yorktown, on what is called the Temple Farm, are many old chimneys, indicating the site of an ancient settlement," although no trace of its existence can be found on this spot today.¹⁷

Near this early settlement, at an unknown date, was built the first church of York Parish, in "the old fields" whose cultivation had already been abandoned for newer and more fertile clearings. Evidence that this church was built by 1642 is found in a deed for 200 acres of land, dated 16th January of that year, given by John Chew to Robert Kinsey and Henry Lowry, "the prsent Church Wardens of the pish of York—for their Gleabe," since the appointment of churchwardens, from the very nature of their duties, presupposes the existence of a church building.¹⁸

It seems probable that it was a frame building, but no record has been found describing it. It was replaced by a new parish church, about the year 1667, as revealed by a General Court entry of that date, recording that the contractor for the church of York Parish had been required to go on and build it.¹⁹ That this second York church was a brick building seems evident from the fact that in 1835, its walls were still standing, several feet high, which could hardly have been true of a wooden church on the usual low brick foundation. The existence of a tombstone dated 1655, within the ruined walls of the second church, suggests that both buildings occupied the same site.

Evidence that this later church was roofed with plank instead of shingles is found in the will of Argall Blackstone, made in 1686, which gives permission to the vestry of York Parish, if they would cover the church with plank instead of clapboards, to use trees on his estate for that purpose.²⁰ In colonial church specifications, the word "cover" uniformly refers to the roof, and the use of planks for this purpose, instead of shingles, is often encountered. In the same testament, Blackstone left to the church a silver wine bowl, inscribed with his name, to be purchased out of the sale of a hogshead of tobacco. In making this bequest, he followed the example of his grandfather, William Hawkins, who left York Church "a silver flaggon" at his death in 1655.²¹

¹⁷ Howe, *Virginia: History and Antiquities*, 522.

¹⁸ *York County Wills and Deeds, 1645-1649*, II, 274.

¹⁹ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 510.

²⁰ *York County Deeds, Orders, Wills, 1687-1691*, VIII, 107.

²¹ *York County Deeds, Orders, Wills, 1633-1657*, I, 254.

Passing out of service upon its replacement by a new building at the close of the century, this early church became so completely forgotten that, when Howe visited its site a century and a half later, he mistook its remains for "the vestiges of an ancient temple" and its churchyard wall for a fortification "probably intended for defense against sudden attacks by the Indians."

This account by Howe, published in 1846, reflects a persistent legend, connecting the name Temple Farm with this supposed temple. Bishop Meade, writing in 1857, elaborates on this legend by stating that Temple Farm was the country residence of Governor Alexander Spotswood in the early eighteenth century, and was so-called "because of a house in its garden, built by the Governor as a cemetery" (i. e., mausoleum). In confirmation, he quotes a letter from Dr. William H. Sheild, owner of Temple Farm from 1834 to 1839, stating that Temple Farm "according to history, was once the residence of Governor Spotswood," and that fragments of a tombstone found within the ruined walls of "the Temple, from which the place took its name," showed that Spotswood was buried there.²²

Unfortunately for the historical acceptance of this interesting legend, the title to Temple Farm has been traced, without a break, back to the original owner, Governor Harvey, and no record has been found to indicate that Governor Spotswood ever owned the property or either lived or was buried there. A later theory, connecting Temple Farm with Spotswood by attributing ownership of the historic Moore House, which still stands upon it, to the governor's son-in-law, Bernard Moore, has also been refuted, since the house evidently was named for Augustine Moore, of a different branch of the family, who bought it in 1769, nearly thirty years after Spotswood's death.²³

Independent of the thoroughly-refuted tradition of a mythical temple-mausoleum, a plausible explanation of the name Temple Farm has been brought to light by modern research. This explanation is based on the fact that this land was held for some years, during the late seventeenth century, by the Reverend Peter Temple, rector of York Parish.²⁴

The first recorded use of such a name that has yet been found occurs in a deed of trust dated 30th April, 1767, from Robert Smith to William Nelson, in which the site of the second York Church is called "the

²² Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 225-227.

²³ Tyler's *Quarterly*, I, 239.

²⁴ Tyler's *Quarterly*, I, 239.

Temple Field.”²⁵ Since the contemporary deed of 1769, giving title to 22 acres of this property, refers to the same site as “the Church Field,”²⁶ there does not seem to have been, at that period, any popular misconception about the identity of the old church’s ruins.

The earliest known evidence of such a misconception is afforded by a military map, made by a French engineer during the siege of Yorktown in 1781 and now in the Library of Congress.²⁷ On this map, the ruins of old York Church are distinctly shown and unmistakably marked “Temple”, and this suggests that the misconception may have originated with this foreign map-maker, who was familiar with temple remains in Europe and failed to realize their incongruity in a newer land.

The historic site of old York Church, together with most of Temple Farm, now lies within the Naval Fuel Depot reservation, two miles below Yorktown. The church’s brick foundation, which was reported as still visible in 1907,²⁸ can only be dimly traced today with the aid of a sounding rod, but appears to have been rectangular with outside dimensions of about forty-two by twenty-four feet. The churchyard wall has entirely disappeared, although a slight trace of its footing is evident where it crosses the present road northwest of the church site. Many small old bricks, both glazed and unglazed, are in evidence, one of the few unbroken ones measuring only 8" x 4" x 2."

Within the foundation there may still be seen the second oldest legible tombstone in Virginia, which marks the grave of Major William Gooch, who died in 1655.²⁹ This slab was reported by Dr. Sheild to have been, in 1834, the only entire and unbroken tombstone left within the old church’s ruined walls, which were then several feet high,³⁰ and Howe, in 1846, describes it as the only legible stone within the entire churchyard enclosure.³¹ This ancient monument has armorial bearings, and the quaint inscription is well worth recording again:

²⁵ *York County Deeds*, 1763-69, VII, fol. 312.

²⁶ *York County Deeds*, 1769-77, VIII, 9.

²⁷ Map, *Environs of Yorktown*, 1781. (Photostat at the Mariners’ Museum, Newport News.)

²⁸ Micou, *Colonial Churches*, 127.

²⁹ The oldest legible tombstone in Virginia is that of Mrs. Alice Jordan, who died in January, 1650/1, and is buried in the garden at Four Mile Tree, Surry County, although the stone has been moved to the plantation graveyard.

³⁰ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 227.

³¹ Howe, *Virginia: History and Antiquities*, 522.

"Major William Gooch of this [parish]
Dyed Octob: 29, 1655

With in this tomb there doth interred [lie]
No shape, but substance, true [nobility:]
It self, though young, in years but [twenty-nine;]
Yet graced with vertues morall and [divine;]
The church from him did good [participate]
In counsell rare fit to adorn a [State.]"

It is regrettable that souvenir hunters have chipped away one edge of the stone, narrowly missing the date, so that the last word in each line of the inscription has been lost. In the above version, the missing words have been supplied from earlier records and enclosed in brackets. About fifteen years ago the old church's site was enclosed by the naval authorities within a steel pipe rail carried by wooden posts, now badly in need of replacement. A heavy guard of closely spaced pipe cross rails was then placed over the gravestone to protect it from further vandalism, while a small pavilion was erected to shelter it from the weather, as shown in Plate 45.

When Yorktown was established in 1691, in response to an act of assembly of that year, calling for 50 acres of land to be bought and laid out for a port in each county,³² the center of government was moved to the new location, and the pioneer settlement of York sank into insignificance. The first public building undertaken at the new town was a county court-house, but it was soon followed by a new church, which replaced as York Parish Church the old brick building on Wormeley's Creek, and the latter was then abandoned.³³

This third York Church was built on high ground, overlooking the river, near the center of the new town, and is still in service under the name of Grace Church. Its exact date of construction is not recorded, but is generally accepted as 1697, from a significant entry in the county order book. This entry, dated 26th October, 1696, records the following pledge by Governor Francis Nicholson:

"I promise to give five pounds sterl'g towards building the cott. house at Yorke Town, and twenty pounds sterling if within two years they build a brick church att the same towne."³⁴

³² Hening, *Statutes at Large*, III, 53.

³³ Tyler's *Quarterly*, I, 238.

³⁴ Howe, *Virginia: History and Antiquities*, 520.

The church was not built of brick, however, but of blocks of native marl, cut out of the York River cliffs in a soft condition, and later hardened almost to stone by exposure to the weather. As originally constructed, the building had the shape of a T, with its top lying east and west, forming the main body of the church, and its stem lying north and south, as a wing projecting from the north side of the main building, thirty inches west of its center. Both the main church and wing were twenty-eight feet wide, outside, the main church being fifty-five feet long, over all, and the wing projecting twenty-nine feet from the north church wall, with foundation walls twenty-seven inches thick. An original water color sketch of Yorktown, found among the papers of the British General Simcoe and now owned by the Williamsburg Restoration, shows the church with a steeple. The north wing may have been a later addition, but no record of its construction has been found.

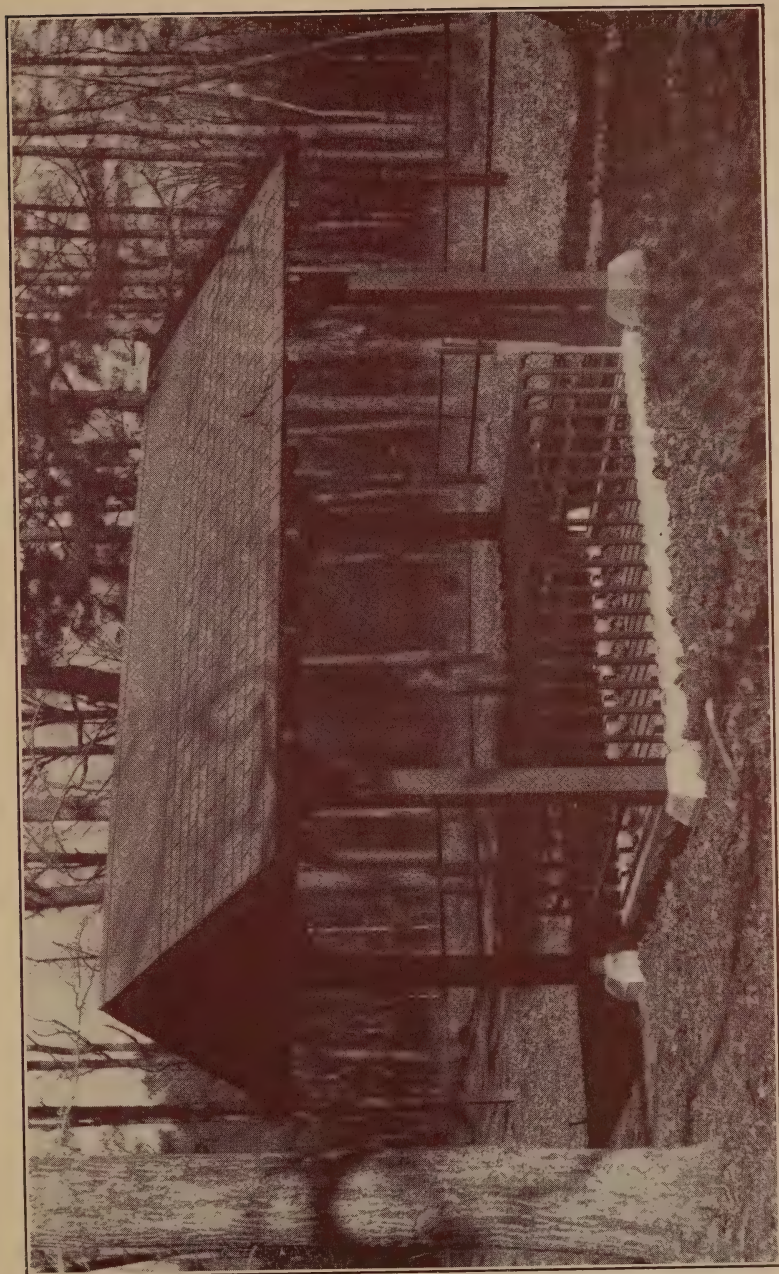
The third York Church's commanding position on the river bank subjected it to desecration by military use in war, and it suffered heavy damages in all three of the major conflicts through which it has passed. In the Revolutionary War, it was used as a magazine by Lord Cornwallis, and its pews and windows were broken and destroyed, the damage being assessed at £100, as recorded in the county archives.³⁵ The old building met with complete disaster in 1814, when it was burned, with the court-house, Nelson house and many other structures in the town. Contrary to accepted tradition, this conflagration was accidental and not caused by the British, although one of their warships was in sight at the time.³⁶ The ruined church was later rebuilt and replaced in service, but during the Federal Army's occupation of Yorktown in the Civil War, a signal tower was erected upon its roof, and the old building was dismantled and robbed of its colonial churchyard wall.³⁷

A tablet recently placed on the west end of Grace Church contains the statement that it was partly rebuilt in 1825, which seems to be based upon Bishop Moore's reports to the annual conventions of the church. These reveal that, in 1825, the bishop held services in Yorktown at the court-house and Nelson House, showing that the church had not been rebuilt by that date, but that in 1828, he preached at Yorktown "to a respectable congregation," which is taken to imply

³⁵ *York County Records, Losses in British Invasion of 1781*, 79.

³⁶ *Richmond Enquirer*, March 9, 1814.

³⁷ Micou, *Colonial Churches of Virginia*, 130.



Site of first York Church.



PLATE 46.

Grace Church, Yorktown.

that the church had been restored to service, although it is not even mentioned in the report.³⁸

This assumption, that the colonial York Church was restored in 1825, is contradicted by documentary evidence showing that the church had not been even partially rebuilt by 1841. This evidence, now in the possession of Mrs. Conway Sheild, Sr., of Yorktown, consists of a subscription list, opened in that year and headed "The Old Church in Yorktown", its stated object being "to have the shell of this ancient building once more reared as a place of worship." This subscription evidently was unsuccessful, as shown by later records proving that the rebuilding actually took place in 1848.

These records are found in the printed reports to the Diocesan Conventions of 1848 and 1849, made by the rector of Yorkhampton Parish, the Rev. Charles E. Minnigerode. These reports state that in 1847 "the Church [at Yorktown] had been given up entirely for many years" and that "services are held at the court-house . . . but efforts have been made to raise sufficient funds for the rebuilding of the ancient church at York." A year later, the rector reports that "no money has been collected, except for the rebuilding of the Church. A sufficiency of funds being anticipated, a contract has been made, according to which the Church is to be built on its former site and partly on the old walls, and to be completed within a short time."

The proof is concluded by the report of Bishop Meade to the Convention of 1849 that, during his fall visitation of 1848, he "consecrated the new church at York." Since the parish church at Yorktown was never called Grace Church in colonial records, it seems probable that this name was first applied to it when it was consecrated in 1848. This is confirmed by the fact that the earliest recorded reference to the old church, under its new name, is found in the report of its next rector, the Rev. Edmund Withers, to the Convention of 1849.

Ample confirmation of the evidence, that the old York Church was not rebuilt until 1848, is given by the contemporary historians, Benson G. Lossing and Henry Howe. Writing in 1850, Lossing states that the church remained a ruin for thirty years after the fire of 1814, before being repaired, and his illustration of the churchyard shows the ruined church in the background.³⁹ Howe, whose materials, like those of Lossing, were collected several years before publication, describes and illustrates the church as still in ruins in 1846.⁴⁰

³⁸ Hawks, *Convention Journals of Diocese of Virginia*, I, 176, 215.

³⁹ Lossing, *Field Book of the Revolution*, II, 302.

⁴⁰ Howe, *Virginia: History and Antiquities*, 520.

The original north wing was not rebuilt when the church was restored to service and the repaired building was given a coat of stucco to hide the scars left by the flames. Bishop Meade's statement that the old church's exterior became "one solid wall," through the partial melting of the marl blocks composing it, cannot be authenticated.⁴¹ Both Howe and Lossing, in their illustrations of the ruined church after the fire, show the marl blocks entirely separate, and the present smooth appearance of the walls is manifestly due to a heavy application of stucco over the entire surface. There is also no evidence of fusion between the marl blocks forming the exposed foundation of the former north wing.

The old church's bell, traditionally given by Queen Anne, is still in use. As it is inscribed "County of York, Virginia, 1725," while good Queen Anne died in 1714, this tradition, like similar ones attached to other colonial church furnishings of even later periods, cannot be substantiated. One writer relates that the bell was broken in the fire of 1814 and the fragments laid aside in the vestry room, although it is obvious that no vestry room could have existed after the fire.⁴² Since Howe reported in 1846 that the bell had been preserved while the church was in ruins, it seems more likely that the breakage occurred during the Civil War. In support of this conclusion, we find another account which ascribes the bell's destruction to a magazine explosion during McClellan's occupation of Yorktown, which damaged the belfry and allowed the bell to fall.⁴³ Both versions agree that the fragments were carried off, presumably by Federal soldiers, but were found in Philadelphia in 1882 and identified by the inscription. As a result, the old bell was recast in its original form out of the same metal and restored to duty in 1889.⁴⁴

An even greater treasure than this historic bell is the ancient communion service of Hampton Parish, which is still in use at Grace Church. This service consists of a chalice and flagon of antique hammered silver, made in London in 1649, both pieces being inscribed "Hampton parrish in Yorke County in Verginia."

Old Grace Church was embellished in 1926 by the addition of a belfry, doorway and small rose window, for none of which any close precedent can be found in existing Virginia colonial churches. Five years later, its churchyard wall was rebuilt in colonial style, in its

⁴¹ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 204.

⁴² Micou, *Colonial Churches of Virginia*, 130.

⁴³ Stoudt, *Nicholas Martiau, the Adventurous Huguenot*, 97.

⁴⁴ Micou, *Colonial Churches of Virginia*, 130.

original location, and the church's interior was greatly beautified, although not in any sense authentically restored, since nothing is known of the church's original arrangement.

In order to trace the story of the other colonial parishes in York County, we must revert to the early days of their establishment. The Indian massacre of 1622 left the settlers in fear of further depredations by the savages, while the colony's weakened condition seemed to invite attack by the Spaniards. It was therefore proposed by the general court of Virginia, on 13th January, 1626/7, to place a garrison at Chiskiack, both as a convenient point from which "to annoy the Indians" and as "a good retreat, in case wee may have beene overpowered by too powerfull a forreine enemy."⁴⁵ The first actual settlement at this point seems to have been made in October, 1630,⁴⁶ in response to an act of assembly passed a year earlier, providing for a company of twenty-seven men to be sent to plant corn at Chiskiack and settle there.⁴⁷

This settlement, the earliest recorded in York County, was made a parish by act of assembly of January, 1639/40, under the name of Chiskiack. The parish bounds, as laid down in this act, extended from Morgan's Creek to Scimino Creek, along Charles River, and included the new settlement of Middle Plantation. The act directed the parishioners of Chiskiack "with all convenient speed" to build a parish church and provide themselves with "an able and conformable minister," beside laying out two hundred acres of glebe land, "whereon to build a parson's house."⁴⁸

In apparent conflict with the above record of Chiskiack Parish's creation in 1639/40, there is recorded a land grant of 29th July, 1635, to George Keith, "pastor of Chiskiack,"⁴⁹ and there is also documentary proof that Anthony Panton was inducted as rector of both York and Chiskiack in January, 1637/8.⁵⁰ These records illustrate the fact that the act of assembly erecting a parish was, very often, merely the official recognition of the existence of a parish organization which had already been functioning for several years. This is evident from the large number of colonial parishes that came into being and had active existence, without any recorded legislative action either initiating or confirming their parochial status.

⁴⁵ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 136.

⁴⁶ *William and Mary Quarterley* (1), XXIV, 27.

⁴⁷ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 139.

⁴⁸ *William and Mary Quarterley* (2), IV, 155.

⁴⁹ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 29.

⁵⁰ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XIII, 376.

The Rev. Anthony Panton was the victim of an atrocious persecution by Governor John Harvey, as the result of the minister's having called Richard Kemp, secretary of the colony, a "jackanapes," with other disparaging remarks.⁵¹ For this offense, Panton was banished on October 8, 1638, on pain of death if he returned, and his property and tythes were confiscated. Not the least amazing record in the case is a letter from the governor, dated 19th March, 1638/9, which reads: "You the parishioners of Chiskiack, I desire you to shell the tithe corn now in your custody, because I shall have occasion to transport it by water for my use at Jamestown" and is signed "Your loving friend, John Harvey."⁵² Panton was later vindicated and restored to his parish by Governor Sir Francis Wyatt, Harvey's successor.⁵³

Since the official accounts of this strange episode reveal that the act of 1639/40 was promptly obeyed, in regard to the provision of a "parson's house,"⁵⁴ it seems fair to assume that the parish church also ordered by the act was actually built soon after the above date. Nothing is known of this first Chiskiack Church's site or type of construction, but it was probably a frame building and may have stood by the river, in the area between King's Creek and Morgan's Creek, near the first settlement at Chiskiack. It seems probable that this was the church in which George Hopkins, minister, is recorded as having been buried in 1645, since the account of his estate indicates that he was minister of Chiskiack in 1643-5.⁵⁵

In March, 1642/3, the parish name was changed to Hampton, apparently without reference to the same name already applied to Hampton River in the neighboring county of Elizabeth City.⁵⁶ A plausible explanation of the change is suggested by the early records, in which the name Chiskiack appears in no less than twenty-five different spellings. These range from the earliest recorded version, Kiskyake, to a later corrupted form, Cheescake, which persisted as the accepted title of the parish church more than two centuries after its official abandonment as the name of the parish.⁵⁷

In response to an act of assembly of 1696, permitting the weaker parishes to unite with others,⁵⁸ the two small parishes of York and

⁵¹ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 481.

⁵² *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XIV, 189.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, X, 265.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, V, 127.

⁵⁵ *York County Wills, Deeds, 1645-1649*, II, 89.

⁵⁶ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 251.

⁵⁷ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 197.

⁵⁸ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, III, 151.

Hampton were consolidated by order of council dated 8th February, 1706, and the combined parish was named Yorkhampton.⁵⁹ The still smaller parish of Martin's Hundred, in James City County, was added to Yorkhampton Parish in 1712.⁶⁰

The first Chiskiack Parish Church seems to have been replaced, about 1700, by a brick church in a more central location on the ridge between Felgate's and King's Creeks.⁶¹ The new building, always known as Cheescake Church, stood on the west side of the old highway from Williamsburg to Yorktown, about five miles from the former town and eight miles from the latter. Cheescake Church was abandoned by its congregation during the early years of the nineteenth century, and was finally taken over in 1825 by a Campbellite Baptist organization. They were "locked out" by the original Episcopalian occupants of the building in 1833, and built a new frame church near the present Lebanon Church.⁶² Old Cheescake Church survived in a ruinous condition until the Civil War, when it was torn down to furnish bricks for the chimneys of Federal officers' winter quarters at Williamsburg.⁶³

The site of this old church now lies within the Naval Mine Depot, which includes about half of the old Williamsburg-Yorktown highway. The churchyard is located a quarter mile south of the crossroads known in modern times as Charles Corner, which is exactly five miles west of the south entrance to the Mine Depot. The old church's foundation can be approximately located with a sounding rod and indicates a building about sixty feet by thirty feet, inside. Old bricks on the site measure $8\frac{3}{4}$ " by $4\frac{3}{4}$ " by $2\frac{3}{4}$ " in size, and some are glazed.

Like many other ancient church cites in Virginia, the churchyard is carpeted with white-flowering periwinkle (*Vinca minor*). It is filled with unmarked graves and there are a few tombstones dated around the year 1900. It was used as a burying ground by negroes after the Civil War, and their graves have markers of plank, crudely carved into the shape of a human head and shoulders, as seen in Plate 47.

In contrast to the official establishment of Chiskiack Parish in 1640, no enactment can be found for the creation of New Poquoson Parish, but the first recorded mention of it seems to occur in the will of Benjamin Syms, dated in February, 1634/5. This will, founding the first

⁵⁹ *Tyler's Quarterly*, IX, 210.

⁶⁰ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council*, III, 316.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, I, 260.

⁶² Rev. J. V. Lilly, *Newport News Daily Press*, July 31, 1938.

⁶³ *Tyler's Quarterly*, I, 260.

free school in America, restricts its benefits to "the adjoining parishes of Poquoson and Elizabeth City."⁶⁴

The early existence of New Poquoson Parish, as well as that of its church, is also substantiated by the will of Anthony Yonge, citizen and grocer of London, which is dated 23rd February, 1635/6, and leaves 500 pounds of tobacco "to the church of the newe Poquoson" in Virginia.⁶⁵ Another early reference to the parish is found in a land patent of 14th December, 1639, to Peter Rigby, for 100 acres "in the parish of New Poquoson."⁶⁶

The earliest occurrence of New Poquoson Parish in the York County records appears to be dated 20th December, 1645, when Thomas Waldoe was presented by the "church wardens of the New Poquoson" for "an abuse of the minister and the church and refusing to receive the sacrament."⁶⁷ The General Court minutes record that the minister in question had been inducted for Poquoson Parish on the 20th February, 1644/5.⁶⁸ He is known to have been the Reverend Charles Grimes.

Unlike the other early parishes of York County, New Poquoson Parish was never combined with another parish to form a larger one, but like them, it underwent a change of name. This change was authorized on Dec. 11, 1692, by the House of Burgesses which decreed that "upon the petition of the parishioners of new Poquoson in the county of Yorke, it is ordered that from henceforth forever hereafter the s^d pish shall be called and named Charles Parish and the s^d Pish Church shall be called and named Charles Church. And the River formerly called new poquoson River shall from time to time and at all times hereafter be called, named & written, Charles River."⁶⁹ This order was ineffective with regard to the river, which is called Poquoson River to this day, but in regard to church and parish it was evidently only the official confirmation of a change already contemplated. This is shown by a proclamation recorded in the county annals, nearly ten years previous to the above order, endorsed "Published by me the subscribed the 17th day of June 1683 in Charles Church, John Metcalfe, parish clerk."⁷⁰

One of the two surviving colonial church records of York County, already mentioned, is the register of Charles Parish, which has recently

⁶⁴ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XX, 23.

⁶⁵ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XV, 177.

⁶⁶ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 124.

⁶⁷ *York County Wills, Deeds*, 1645-49, II, 55.

⁶⁸ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, VIII, 72.

⁶⁹ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), XX, 192.

⁷⁰ *York County Deeds, Orders, Wills*, 1677-1684, VI, 509.

been published.⁷¹ Its editor, Mr. Landon C. Bell, justly considers it of unusual interest and value, because it contains earlier entries than does any Virginia church record book that has been preserved and covers an exceptionally long period, from 1648-1789, or more than 140 years. This book records the burial of two of the parish's rectors, in the chancel of the parish church, Rev. Thomas Finney in 1687, and Rev. James Falconer in 1727, the latter's grave being placed "just before the pulpit."

There is no justification for Mr. Bell's conclusion that the parish name was once changed to "New Towson", since the latter has been proved to be merely a transcriber's error for "New Pocowson", found in a 1680 list of Virginia parishes, as republished by the General Assembly in 1874.⁷² Conclusive proof of this error has been secured through comparison with a photostatic copy of the original list in the Public Record Office at London.⁷³

Confirmation of the early existence of a church building for New Poquoson Parish, as suggested by Anthony Yonge's will of 1636, is found in a mutilated court order dated only ten years later, on the 29th January, 1645/6, apparently in connection with a bequest by Humphrey Haumore, to the "pish Church of the New Powquoson pish."⁷⁴

The first indication of the location of this early parish church is given by a court order dated 25th July, 1648, condemning Oliver Segar, for going fishing on Sunday, to build "a sufficient bridge" over a swamp, the road involved being "the church way."⁷⁵ Since this church road is described in the order as leading across the swamp to the land of Captain Christopher Calthorpe, it is evident that this first New Poquoson Church was built on Thorpland plantation, patented by him as early as 1631.⁷⁶

This is confirmed by the will of James Calthorpe, son of Captain Christopher Calthorpe, which was proved in 1688 and gave to the parish of New Poquoson a lot 200 feet square "for the use of the church where the church now stands."⁷⁷ It seems probable, however, that the church mentioned in this will was the successor of the original crude structure of 1636 and had been built on the original church's site, about

⁷¹ Bell, *Register of Charles Parish*.

⁷² *Colonial Records of Virginia*, 103.

⁷³ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVII, 466.

⁷⁴ *York County Wills, Deeds*, 1645-49, II, 79.

⁷⁵ *York County Records*, 1638-48, I, 386.

⁷⁶ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 26.

⁷⁷ *York County Deeds, Orders, Wills*, 1687-91, VII, 427.

six years prior to the gift of this site to the parish, as recorded above. This is strongly suggested by a judgment of 24th January, 1682/3, granted to the churchwardens of the New Poquoson Parish against the estate of the late Robert Everitt, "being a donation of the deceased towards the building of the Parish Church."⁷⁸

It seems possible that this second New Poquoson Church, which is assumed to have been built about 1682, and which later became known as Charles Church, was replaced about 1708 by a new building on the same site. This is indicated, although not definitely established, by the records of a controversy between the vestrymen of the upper and lower precincts of the parish, who were called together on the 6th March, 1706/7, to consult about the "Reparement or Building of a Church in the Aforesaid Parrish."⁷⁹ The meeting resulted in a deadlock and the final unseating of two vestrymen, but on 18th March, 1707/8, the vestry was ordered to appear before Governor Jennings and council to settle the question of building a new parish church, on which the vestry was still equally divided. A new vestry was elected soon afterward, whose members were unanimous on one point, at least, in opposing their rector, the Rev. James Sclater, whom they attempted to remove by "shutting the church doors against him." Although not one of the inducted clergy, Mr. Sclater was upheld by the governor, and retained charge of the parish until his death in 1723, but in the heat of this new quarrel, the final decision as to the church's rebuilding was not recorded.⁸⁰

According to tradition, Charles Church was burned, many years ago, and its ruined walls left where they fell. The last wedding recorded in the old church was by the Rev. John Camm in 1800, and the Rev. Mark Chevers of the neighboring parish of Elizabeth City preached from house to house in Charles Parish in 1828, indicating that the church was no longer in service.⁸¹ It seems likely, therefore, that its destruction by fire took place between the years 1800 and 1828 and probably prior to 1818, since a detailed government topographical map made of this area in that year does not show the church, although the adjoining Glebe Farm and Halfway House are both clearly indicated.⁸²

⁷⁸ *York County Deeds, Orders, Wills, 1677-84*, VI, 447.

⁷⁹ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), XXVI, 34.

⁸⁰ *Calendar of State Papers*, I, 111.

⁸¹ Hawks, *Convention Journals of Diocese of Virginia*, I, 215.

⁸² Map, *U. S. Engineer Dept., Reconnoitering of Chesapeake Bay*, photostat at Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia.



PLATE 47.

Site of second Cheescake Church.

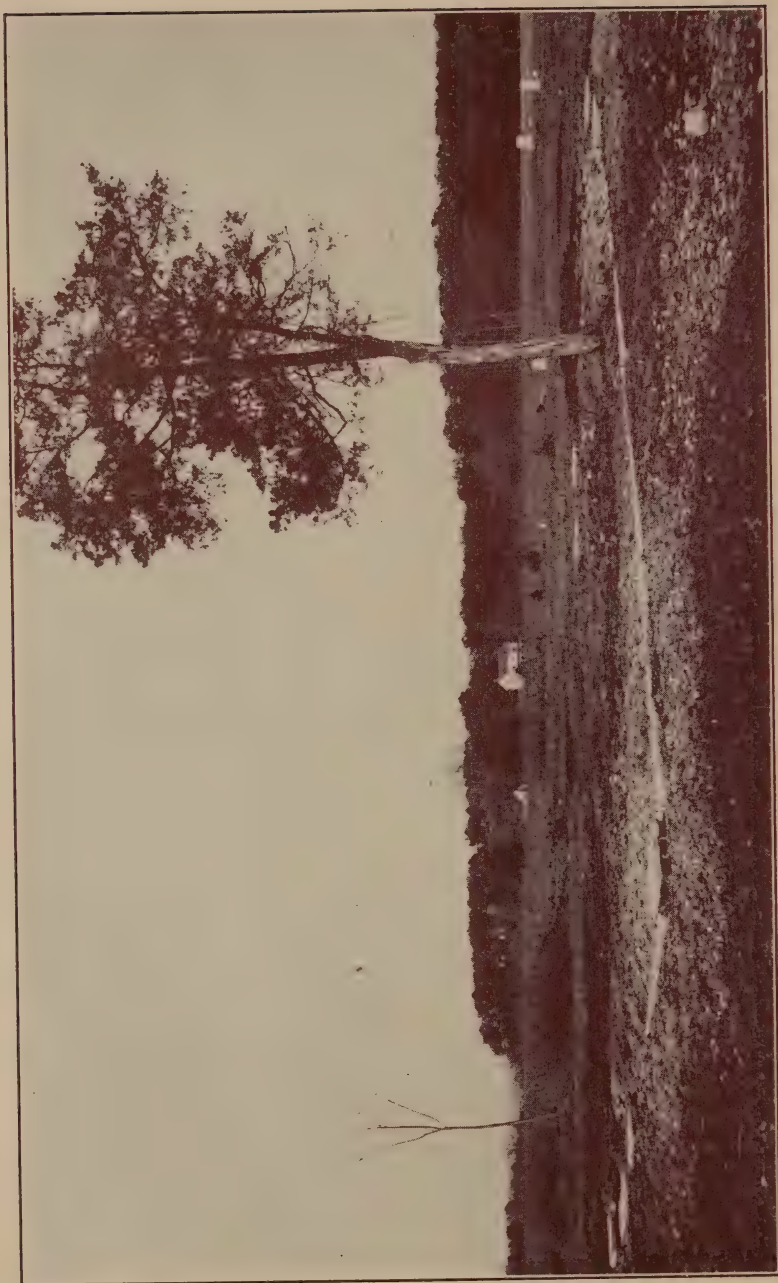


PLATE 48.

Site of first and second Charles Churches.

The site of Charles Parish Church has recently been acquired by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. It is situated on the old road from Hampton to Yorktown, about a quarter mile west of the site of the historic Halfway House, a colonial tavern midway between the two towns. The churchyard acre formerly was covered by a dense thicket of young trees, but has now been cleared, revealing the usual ground cover of white-flowering periwinkle. The old church's foundation, long hidden by a mound of old bricks and earth, has been excavated and found to be that of a brick church about fifty-five by twenty-four feet inside, with walls twenty-one inches thick. An unusual feature, difficult to explain, is a nine-inch offset in the middle of the east end wall. This old foundation has been preserved from further decay by a concrete coping, and it is hoped that some later excavation may be done in order to locate the two ministers' graves in the chancel.

The Yorktown Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities has recently placed at the site a handsome stone marker, bearing a bronze tablet commemorating this early parish and church. It is regrettable that the inscription on this tablet perpetuates the copyist's error as to "New Towson" parish, and that the dates given for the parish's founding and change of name are both eight to ten years too late.

Another early church building in York County was that of Marston Parish, which was formed out of the upper portion of Chiskiack Parish "from the head of the north side of Queen's creeke as high as to the head of Scimino creek" by an act of assembly of November, 1654.⁸³ The exact date of construction of this old church is unknown, but the York County records show that in 1657 Major Joseph Croshaw gave to Marston Parish one acre of his plantation Poplar Neck, near Indian Fields, for a churchyard, on which stood the church already erected for this parish.⁸⁴ This church is evidently the one mentioned in a deed recorded at Yorktown in 1716, from William Jones to Richard Easter, for forty acres "at a place called Indian field, upon the branches of a swamp issuing out of Queen's creek, beginning at a corner red oak near the Old Church . . . and from thence running down John Custis' line to a poplar at the head of the Old Church Spring Branch."⁸⁵

⁸³ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 388.

⁸⁴ *York County Deeds, Orders, Wills, 1657-62*, III, 77.

⁸⁵ *York County Deeds, Bonds, 1713-1729*, III, 171.

In the opinion of Dr. Lyon G. Tyler, Marston Church stood "near Magruder Village, about five miles north of Williamsburg, at the head of Queen's creek," where "at the edge of a wood north of Magruder are tombstones and scattered glazed brick, indicating a graveyard and probable site of a church."⁸⁶ The site, which as Dr. Tyler states elsewhere, is marked by old tombstones of the Garrett family, still remaining, has been visited and found to be actually at the head of Carter's Creek, and only four miles from Williamsburg.⁸⁷ It is, however, near enough to the branches of Haring Swamp, "issuing out [from the north side] of Queen's creek," to agree with the location given for "the Old Church" in the Jones deed of 1716.

No enactment setting up Middle Plantation as a parish has been found, but it seems probable that the settlement of this name functioned as a plantation parish from the beginning, even though it was explicitly included within the bounds of Chiskiack Parish when the latter was created in 1639/40. It is evident, however, that Middle Plantation had become officially recognized as an independent parish soon after creation of Marston Parish in 1654, since a boundary dispute at once arose between the vestries of these two parishes, which was settled by county court order of 25th August, 1656, confirming Marston's original bounds.⁸⁸

Middle Plantation Parish, which lay entirely in the present York County, was combined with Harrop Parish in James City County, by act of assembly of 1st April, 1658, to form the new parish of Middletown.⁸⁹ We have no record of any church having been built for either of the two component parishes, but a deed recorded at Yorktown shows that a parish church was constructed at once for the new Middletown Parish. This deed, from Ralph Simkins and wife to Samuel Fenn, is dated 5th March, 1658/9, and conveys thirty-seven acres of woodland, reserving "2 acres, part thereof, given formerly by the said Simkins to the Parishioners of Middletown parish, and on which a Church is now building."⁹⁰ This church was probably completed about the year 1660 and there is definite evidence that it was in service by 1665/6, when two churches of Christ Church Parish, Middlesex, were both specified to be built according to its model, as brought out in a later chapter.⁹¹

⁸⁶ *Tyler's Quarterly*, I, 262.

⁸⁷ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), III, 171.

⁸⁸ *York County Deeds, Orders, Wills, 1633-1657*, I, 300.

⁸⁹ Henning, *Statutes at Large*, I, 498.

⁹⁰ Tyler, *Williamsburg*, 93.

⁹¹ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XIX, 9, 10.

Middletown and Marston Parishes were united in 1674, by act of assembly, and the consolidated parish was called Bruton.⁹² This name seems to have been derived from the ancestral home of the Ludwell family and the Governor, Sir William Berkeley, both of whom came from Bruton in County Somerset, England.⁹³

In the same year, Thomas Claiborne (son of the noted Colonel William Claiborne) and his wife Sarah (daughter of Samuel Fenn, mentioned in the early deed above) made a deed conveying the wife's share of Ralph Simkins' land at Middle Plantation, again excepting the "two acres on wch the Parish Church of Bruton now standeth, formerly given by Ralph Simkins to the parishioners of Bruton."⁹⁴ This deed, in association with the earlier one already quoted, definitely identifies the former Middletown Parish Church, at Middle Plantation, as the first Bruton Church. Its exact location is not known, but it is possible that it occupied the same site as the present church, under which, at its restoration in 1905, traces of the foundation of an earlier building were discovered.⁹⁵

No vestry book of either Middletown or Marston Parish has been found, but the latter's register of births and deaths was continued as the register of the new Bruton Parish, and is still preserved. It is in a mutilated condition, the births from 1662 to 1739 and the deaths from 1751 to 1792 having been torn out of the front and back of the book, respectively.⁹⁶ A vestry book was started for Bruton Parish, when it was formed in 1674, which disappeared after the Civil War and has never been found.⁹⁷ Fortunately for our knowledge of the parish history, the old vestry book was once in the hands of the Rev. John C. McCabe, a well-known church historian, who published extensive extracts from it in 1855-6.⁹⁸

According to Dr. McCabe, the first entry in this vestry book, dated April 18, 1674, referred to the purchase of a glebe. In November, 1677, the vestry decided not to repair the upper and lower churches in the parish, but "that a New Church should be built with brick, att the Middle Plantation." It seems probable that the upper church mentioned was Marston Church, and that the lower one was the old Mid-

⁹² *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), III, 170.

⁹³ Tyler, *Williamsburg*, 94.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁹⁵ Goodwin, *Bruton Church Restored*, 44, 89.

⁹⁶ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), III, 171.

⁹⁷ Tyler, *Williamsburg*, 94.

⁹⁸ *Church Review*, VIII (1855-6).

dletown Church at Middle Plantation, which had become the first parish church of Bruton in 1674. The wording of the order for a new church "built with brick" seems to imply that the earlier church was a wooden building but nothing is known as to its size or type of construction.

This second Bruton Church was built at Middle Plantation on a new site, comprising the land on which the building stood, "together with sixty feet of the same, everyway, for a Churchyard," which had been given to the parish by Colonel John Page in accordance with a pledge made in 1678, and accompanied by a subscription of £20 sterling toward the building of the church. Contract for the structure was let on the 5th June, 1679, to George Marable, for a price of £350, but due to some disagreement, he brought suit against the vestry and the work was held up.

On the 23rd June, 1681, a new contract was signed with Captain Francis Page to build the church, with some changes from the original plan, for £150 cash and a deferred payment of sixty pounds of tobacco per tithable for three years following. In 1682, permission was granted to Col. John Page and Philip Ludwell, two of the largest subscribers to the building fund, to set up their private pews in the chancel. The new church was completed on the 29th November, 1683, and was ordered to be dedicated on the 6th January, 1684. Strangely enough, this appears to be the only recorded example of either the dedication or consecration of a Virginia church building, during the entire colonial period. Soon after the church was put into service, the vestry book recorded an order for two barrels of tar, indicating that the roof was tarred, perhaps temporarily and until it could be shingled. On May 10, 1686, it was proposed to add a steeple and a ring of bells, but it is not recorded that this was done.

In his publication of abstracts from the old Bruton vestry book, Dr. McCabe mentions that a complete description of the new church was given in the original contract, but unfortunately, he does not quote it. With the disappearance of the vestry book, therefore, this information seemed irretrievably lost. However, there has recently been discovered, in Bruton churchyard, the foundation of an early church, which appears to be that of the second Bruton Church, and hence may reveal its size and type of construction. This foundation, which is shown in Plate 49, is that of a brick church, sixty feet by twenty-four feet, inside, with buttressed side walls 27½ inches thick, indicating that the build-

ing was of Gothic design, like the Jamestown Church and the Old Brick Church in Isle of Wight County.

It seems possible that this church was specified to be built "after the model of" the brick church at Jamestown, even though the two buildings differed in size and proportions. This possibility is suggested by a Bruton vestry order of 1678 requiring the west door and chancel door of the new church at Williamsburg to be "according to the dimensions of James City Church door, only to be one foot higher and $\frac{1}{2}$ a foot wider than they are", since there would have been no occasion to note a difference between the two churches, unless they had already been specified to be generally similar.

The above identification of this foundation is based upon its general agreement, in location, with the church shown on Theodorick Bland's survey of the new town of Williamsburg in 1699, which is manifestly the second Bruton Parish Church, then standing.⁹⁹ The Bland survey shows this church in the center of a churchyard extending equally on all four sides of the building, in conformity with Colonel John Page's gift of a site for the second church in 1678. The location of the church on the survey is also in closer conformity with that of the foundation than with the previously accepted position of the second church, close to Duke of Gloucester Street, on the same site as the present building. It is evident, however, that the church and churchyard are not drawn to the same scale as the rest of the survey plat, so that the latter cannot be taken as final proof that the foundation belonged to the second Bruton Church, even though it strongly supports this conclusion.

Positive proof of the foundation's identity is afforded by the fact that all the tombstones representing burials made during the period of use of the second Bruton Church are located in or around the east end of the foundation, representing the most favored place of interment in a colonial church. A few tombstones which appear to be exceptions to this statement have been moved to new positions within the present church and include those of the Reverend Rowland Jones and Colonel John Page.

An interesting verification of the second Bruton Church's Gothic design is found in a sketch made of it in 1701 by the Swiss traveler Francis Louis Michel. This sketch, published with Michel's journals, is extremely crude, but manifestly attempts to depict the stepped gables of a Gothic church such as the one whose existence is clearly indicated by the buttressed foundation. The buttresses are not shown on the

⁹⁹ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), X, 73.

sketch, but their representation would have been entirely beyond the artist's limited ability.¹⁰⁰

After only a few years service, the new brick church of 1683 seems to have become a source of expense to the vestry, through its constant need of repair. The first evidence of this fact is given by a vestry order of 6th May, 1693: "Whereas the inside work on the Church ought to be rectified and repaired, it is therefore ordered that the . . . Churchwardens provide an able workman to effect the same . . . as soon as they can." Only six years later, further repairs were ordered, and in 1703, the pews had to be mended and a new pulpit installed. Additional improvements were made in the following year, when a pew was fitted up in the chancel for the governor and council, and the church floor was raised.

The condition of the building still remained unsatisfactory, however, since, on the 7th July, 1705, carpenters were ordered "to Visit the Church and to report their opinion to the next Vestry whether it can be repaired," submitting an estimate of labor and material required, in case repair seemed practicable. It is evident that their verdict was unfavorable, for, on the 1st October, 1706, "The Vestry considering the great charge the parish hath been at for the repairing of the Church, and how bad a condition it is still in, Ordered that twenty thousand pounds of Tobacco be levied this year for and towards the building of a new Church."

When the seat of colonial government was transferred from Jamestown to Williamsburg, upon the latter's establishment in 1699, Bruton Parish Church became the state church of the new capital city. It was only natural, therefore, for the Bruton vestry to expect the government to help provide a more suitable church building, and in 1710, they petitioned the House of Burgesses for financial aid toward replacing the old church, which was stated to be growing "ruinous." Having been informed by the vestry that a new church of the same size as the old one, costing £500, would be sufficient for the parish's own needs, the House agreed to appropriate the money necessary for building pews for the governor, council, and burgesses.

On the 1st March, 1710/11, the Rev. James Blair, rector of Bruton Parish, received from Governor Spotswood "a platt or draught of a Church (whose length is 75 foot and bredth 28 foot in the clear with two wings on each side, whose width is 22 foot) which he laid before the Vestry for approbation—Adding further that the Honble the Gov-

¹⁰⁰ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XXIV, 275.

ernor proposed to the Vestry to build only 53 of the 75 foot, and that he would take care for the remaining part." The governor's proposal was accepted by the vestry, and an estimate of cost was ordered for the vestry's share of the building, whose walls were to be twenty-three feet high. An official memorandum, dated December, 1713, shows that the section twenty-two feet wide, whose construction was assumed by the government, included the two transept wings, which were to be nineteen feet long, with walls three bricks thick below the water table and two bricks thick above it.¹⁰¹

Shortly after receipt of the governor's plan for the new church, bids were asked for its construction, but the figures submitted were rejected as exorbitant. On the 17th November, 1711, a contract for the building was awarded to James Morris and he was given three years to finish it. A new draft of the church was ordered on the 28th March, 1712, presumably embodying some changes in design, but there is no record of their character. The new church was practically finished by the 2nd December, 1715, when it was placed in service. On the 9th January, 1715/16, it was "Ordered that the Church Wardens take some convenient care to make the Church tite against the weather." As in the case of the second Bruton Church, this was probably done by tarring the roof, since the new church was not shingled until 1717.

Upon the completion of the third Bruton Church, the vestry's first concern was the seating of the congregation in their handsome new building, and on the 9th January, 1716, it was "ordered that the men sitt on the North side of the Church and the Women on the left," in accordance with the prevailing custom in colonial churches. It was further "Ordered that Mr. Commissary Blair sitt in the head pew in the Church, and that he may carry any Minister into the same" and "that the Parishioners be seated in the Church and none others."

It seems probable that the usual gallery in the west end of the nave was provided when the church was built. A large part of this gallery was assigned to the College of William and Mary, soon after the new church's completion, by the following order of vestry: "Ordered that liberty shall be given the Colledge to take that part of the Gallery for the use of the Colledge youth, as far from the pillar on the south side of the Isle of the Church to the north side of the Church, also that further leave be given them to put a door with a lock and key to it, to the stairs of the said Gallery, and the sexton to keep the key."

¹⁰¹ *Calendar of State Papers, I, 174.*

With the rapid growth in population of the new capital city, more seating space was soon needed for the church's enlarged congregation, and it was most readily obtained by the construction of more galleries. The first such gallery authorized was in the south transept wing, and was built by Mr. John Holloway, at his own expense, in accordance with a vestry order of 17th December, 1720. This gallery was at first a private one, but in 1753, the half nearest the pulpit was "appropriated for the use of the College of William and Mary," perhaps for the seating of its officers and faculty.

Soon after the "Colledge youth" had been successfully reduced to order by segregation in the west gallery, similar control was exercised over an even greater source of disturbance, the small boys of the parish, by appropriating to their exclusive use a new gallery ordered in 1721, to be "built in the south side of the body of the Church, from the Gallery already erected in the west end unto the edge of the third window, to project six feet, and to be adorned with banisters." This gallery along the south wall of the nave was extended to the corner of the south transept wing on 9th May, 1744.

At the height of Williamsburg's importance as the colonial capital, even these gallery additions proved inadequate to accommodate the congregation, and in 1752 the vestry decided to enlarge the church. The plan adopted is revealed by an advertisement of 15th May, 1752, in the *Virginia Gazette*, "for an addition to be made to the East End of the Church here to make that End of equal Length from the Wings as the West End." This change added twenty-five feet to the chancel end of the building, and brought the church up to its present inside length of one hundred feet. The cost was met by act of assembly.

That the church had been in need of repairs before its enlargement is shown by a vestry order of 3rd December, 1742, ordering the whole roof to be resingled, the pews to be renewed and the pulpit placed in the southeast corner. Two years later, the church floor was raised, the aisle relaid with the same stone, and the church's interior newly white-washed and painted. The bad condition of the transept walls, indicated by the vestry's request that the general assembly contribute for their repair, in 1744, may account for each wing having been reduced in length to $14\frac{1}{2}$ feet, probably when the church was enlarged; but it is also likely that the reduction was made to clear the churchyard wall ordered at the time of the enlargement. This wall was built by Samuel Spurr and finished by October, 1754.

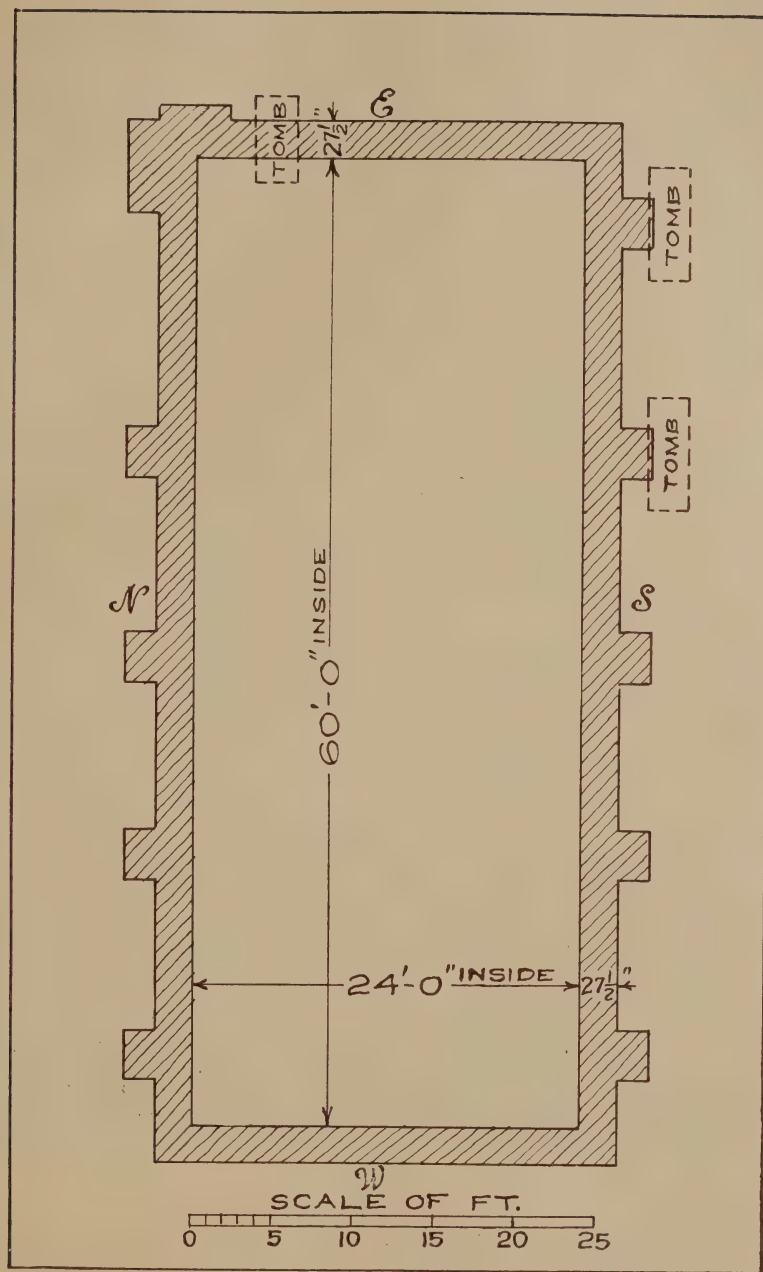


PLATE 49. *Foundation of second Bruton Church.*



As thus enlarged, the church is symmetrical in form about both of its axes, the chancel and nave being exactly equal in length. There are three windows in each side of the chancel and nave, and one in each side of the transept wings. A large circular rose window is set in each gable of the transept and chancel. The main entrance doorway is at the west end of the nave, and a secondary entrance is provided at each end of the transept. The walls are built of salmon-red brick, laid in Flemish bond with the conventional glazed headers, and the doors, windows and corners of the building are trimmed with brick of a brighter red. All three doors are finished with plain circular heads, ornamented with alternating glazed headers around the rim of the arch.

Additional seating accommodations were provided in 1762, when Mr. Benjamin Waller, on behalf of himself and others, was allowed to build a gallery along the north side of the nave, corresponding to the gallery built on the south side in 1721. The only other available gallery location, in the north transept, was occupied at an unrecorded date by a gallery devoted to the colored servants of the parish and entered by a covered outside stairway built against the transept's west wall.

An organ purchased by the colonial government, at a cost of £200, was installed in a loft built in 1755, probably in the east end of the chancel. This is confirmed by a water-color painting, now owned by the College of William and Mary, which shows a covered stairway, with shingled exterior, leading up around the northeast corner of the chancel wing to a doorway in the east gable, at the gallery level. This painting was made in 1834, just six years before the destructive alteration of the church's colonial interior, and is the last-known picture showing the church as it appeared in colonial times.

The final improvement of the present Bruton Church, during the colonial period, was by the building, in 1769, of a new steeple, which manifestly replaced an earlier structure, serving the same purpose, since the vestry order provided that the contractor, Benjamin Powell, was "to have the Old Bell and the Materials of the old Steeple."

The new structure was first proposed by the vestry in 1768 as a "belfry" or bell-tower. Bids for this improvement were requested in the following advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* of 22nd December, 1768: "To let on Wednesday 4th of January next [1769] if fair: otherwise the next fair day, the building of a steeple in Williamsburg to Williamsburg Church. All gentlemen that intend to undertake are desired to attend that day at the church with proper plans and report estimate

to each plan. John Pierce, William Eaton, Church Wardens.¹⁰² Another contemporary reference to this bell-tower is found in a letter from Ann Blair, sister of the Reverend John Blair, to her friend Martha Braxton, dated in 1769: "They are building a steeple to our Church, the Door's for that reason is open every day; and scarce an evening . . . but we are entertained with the performance's of Felton's, Handel's, Vi-vally's, etc." (referring to practice by the organist).¹⁰³

None of the published references to the new steeple make it clear whether its construction involved merely the replacement of the wooden superstructure on top of the present brick tower or included the erection of the tower itself. Whatever the date of the brick tower's construction, it is evident that it was added after the church's completion, since it is a separate structure and the raked mortar joints of the church's west end wall run through to the doorway between tower and church and these joints could not have been raked after the tower was built. Furthermore, the bricks composing the walls of the tower are of different size, color and texture from those in the church walls. This difference has been explained by the assumption that the bricks from the old church were used to build the tower of the new church after the latter's completion. In support of this assumption, there is quoted a vestry order of the 16th November, 1716, requiring "that the Church Wardens dispose of all the materials belonging to the old Church, excepting the bricks", which might plausibly be interpreted as reserving these old bricks for a definite future purpose, such as a tower's construction.

If so, they must have been used to build an earlier tower, presumably "the old Steeple" of the contract of 1769, since the bricks of the present tower not only do not agree in size with those of the old church's foundation, but are harder, redder and better burned than those of the present church, indicating a period of production much later in the development of the colonial brick-making art. On this basis, the steeple erected in 1769 included both the brick tower and wooden superstructure above it, and the old steeple, if not an earlier tower, may have been a frame belfry or cupola on the church roof. A bell for the new belfry was donated in the same year, and is still in service with the original inscription: "The gift of Joseph Tarpley to Bruton Parish —1769".

¹⁰² *Virginia Historical Magazine*, X, 275.

¹⁰³ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), XVI, 179.

The colonial interior of the third Bruton Church was almost completely destroyed in 1840 by a rearrangement of the church to provide a separate Sunday school room, the old nave being partitioned off for this purpose, just west of the third window from the church tower. By this change, the church was practically turned around, and the altar was placed against the new partition at the west side of the transept. A new entrance door was cut in the east end wall and the old west entrance through the tower was closed, the tower room being devoted to the storage of coal.¹⁰⁴

Under the leadership of the rector, Rev. W. A. R. Goodwin, the church was restored to its original beauty in 1905, as the forerunner of his great project for the restoration of Williamsburg, now successfully nearing completion through the beneficence of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Further restoration to meet the urgent need of repair and embody recent information has recently been completed by the vestry in cooperation with the architectural division of the Williamsburg Restoration.

Among its many treasures, the present Bruton Parish Church possesses three historic sets of colonial communion silver. The oldest dates from 1661, when it was given to Jamestown Church by Francis Morrison, acting governor of the colony, and contains a chalice and paten. It has been in use at Bruton Church since Jamestown Church was abandoned. The second set consists of a two-handled cup and cover, believed to have been bequeathed to William and Mary College by Lady Gooch, wife of the governor, and is dated 1686. This set is supplemented by a paten of 1737 and is commonly called the Queen Anne set, but there is no basis for this title. The third set was given to the present Bruton Church by King George III and contains a flagon of 1766, with chalice of 1764. There is also an unmarked silver alms basin, long used at Bruton, and another of 1739, from Jamestown Church.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Goodwin, *Bruton Church Restored*, 49.

¹⁰⁵ Goodwin, *Bruton Church*, 68.

CHAPTER XI.

Gloucester and Mathews County Churches

IN THE DEVELOPMENT of colonial Gloucester County, Virginia, and of its parishes, there is a complete absence of the successive subdivision and combination of territory that mark the history of the parent county, York, and its parishes. Not only did Gloucester County maintain its original area throughout colonial times, but it also maintained its primary subdivision into four parishes. These four parishes, Petsworth, Abingdon, Ware and Kingston, appear to have been simultaneously created, shortly after the county's formation, and retained their original boundaries unchanged up to the close of the colonial era. Petsworth was the most westerly of these four parishes, while Ware lay just north of Abingdon in the middle of the county and Kingston occupied the entire section east of North River. In 1791, after the colonial period, Kingston Parish was cut off to form the present county of Mathews.¹

Unlike the parent county, York, whose ancient churches have been discussed in a previous chapter, Gloucester County possesses few colonial county records, nearly all its archives having been destroyed by fire, either in 1820, through the burning of the county clerk's office, or in 1865, at the fall of Richmond, where they had been sent for safe-keeping.² As a result of this loss, dependence must be placed upon surviving parish records, and it is fortunate that vestry books have been preserved and published for both Petsworth³ and Kingston,⁴ although their colonial churches have long since passed away. Even this resource is lacking in the case of Ware and Abingdon Parishes, whose churches still exist, for their only extant parish records are fragmentary registers, which are mainly of genealogical interest.⁵

Land grants were made in what later became Gloucester County, then a part of Charles River County, as early as 1635, when Hugh Gwynn was granted, by order of court, 1000 acres in what is now the northern part of Mathews County, and the grant was confirmed

¹ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, XIII, 162.

² Lee, *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, 177.

³ Chamberlayne, *Vestry Book of Petsworth Parish*.

⁴ Chamberlayne, *Vestry Book of Kingston Parish*.

⁵ Originals at State Library, Richmond.

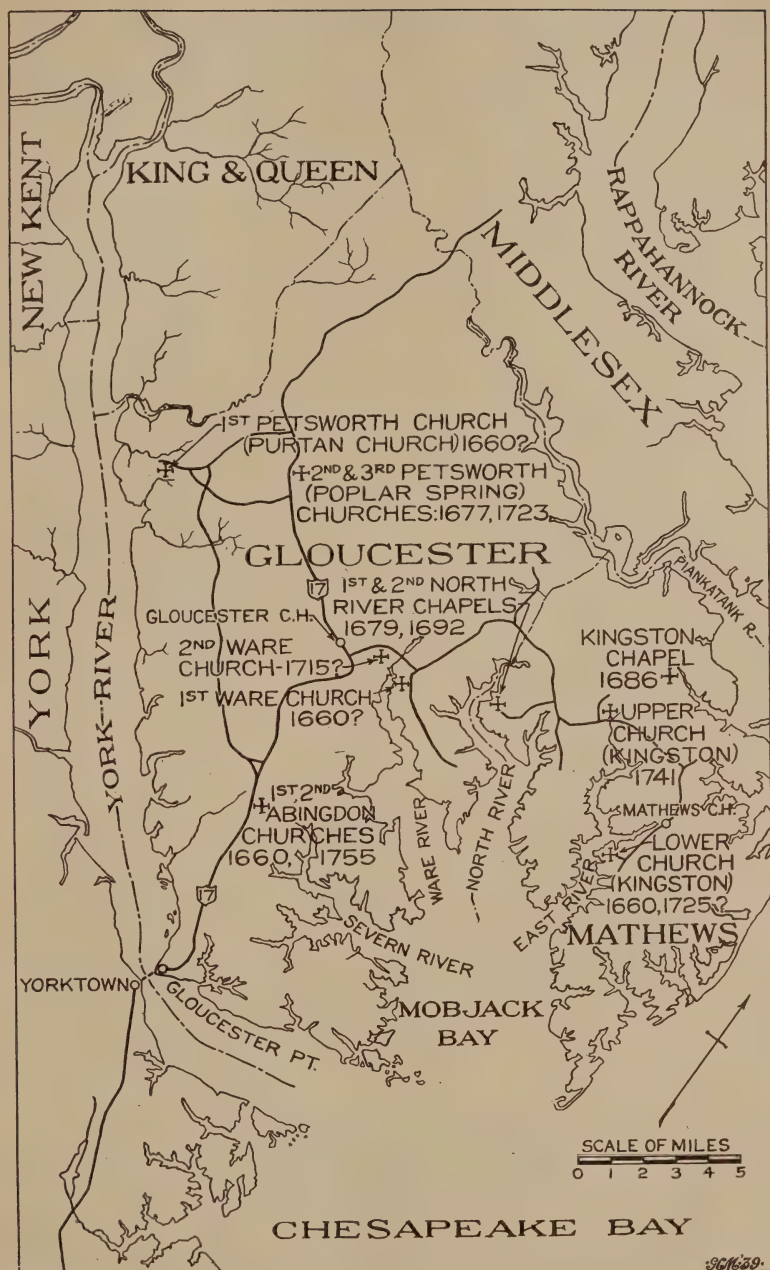


PLATE 51 Map of Gloucester and Mathews Counties.



by patent in 1642. This grant was made at such an early stage of settlement that the names of creeks and rivers given as boundaries are left blank in the patent, but later grants for adjoining lands identify this tract as lying on the mainland west of the present Gwynn's Island.⁶ All colonists north of York River were recalled, however, as a result of the Indian war of 1644-46,⁷ and this territory was not again thrown open to settlement until the 1st September, 1649.⁸ Establishment of Gloucester County apparently followed within two years of this date, but no legislative enactment for its creation has been found.

This lack has been attributed to the unsettled state of affairs in Virginia between the execution of King Charles in January, 1649/50, and the surrender of the colony to the Commonwealth on the 12th March, 1652. During most of this period, no grand assemblies were held, and at the next meeting of this legislative body, in April, 1652, Gloucester County was already represented by two burgesses. The first recorded mention of the county by name seems to be in a land grant in the Virginia Land Office records, dated 21st May, 1651, and this year is generally accepted as the date of the county's formation.⁹

No act of assembly specifically establishing any of the four parishes in Gloucester has come to light, but it is probable that they were simultaneously created by county court order, in accordance with Act IX of the Grand Assembly of March 10, 1655/6, which required that "all counties not yet laid off into parishes be divided into parishes, the next county court."¹⁰ The earliest record of the existence of one of the Gloucester parishes seems to be a land patent dated 15th March, 1657/8, for land in Kingston Parish.¹¹

Since Gloucester County was the scene of Nathaniel Bacon's last stand and death, in the rebellion of 1676, it is apparently more than a coincidence that Petsworth Parish's ancient vestry book opens in 1677, the year after the close of the rebellion. There seems to be good reason to believe that previous vestry records, in this and other counties vitally affected by this insurrection, were destroyed or defaced, as treasonably incriminating, according to the vestry book's editor, the late Dr. Churchill G. Chamberlayne.¹²

⁶ *Patent Book*, I, Part 2, 806.

⁷ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 323.

⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 353.

⁹ Chamberlayne, *Vestry Book of Petsworth Parish*, x.

¹⁰ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 400.

¹¹ Virginia Land Office, *Patent Book*, IV, 304.

¹² Chamberlayne, *Vestry Book of Petsworth Parish*, viii.

The same authority notes that the parish is called Petsoe in the early part of the vestry record, up to 1714, when the name Petsworth appears. After this, the two names are used interchangeably, until the form Petsoe is entirely abandoned and Petsworth uniformly employed. The parish seems to have been named for the ancestral parish of Mrs. Ann Bernard, a prominent early settler, who came from Petsoe in Buckinghamshire, England, and upon whose plantation of Purtan, in Gloucester County, the first church of Petsworth Parish was built.¹³ It is also apparent that Petsoe was merely a colloquial version of the original name Petsworth, which was finally adopted as the correct title of the parish.

The old vestry book of Petsworth Parish opens on 23rd January, 1677, with a reference to subscriptions taken for building a parish church at Poplar Spring, but subsequent orders refer repeatedly to an earlier building called "the old church in the lower part of this parish" or "Purton Church." This old church, the first recorded as having been built in the parish, stood on a high point of land on the north side of Purtan Creek, about a mile from Purtan Bay on York River. Its churchyard was included in the original Purtan plantation and traditionally was granted to the parish by its owner, Mrs. Ann Bernard.

It is believed that the name Purtan, or Purton, is a corruption of Powhatan and commemorates the plantation's location on the site of the Indian king's chief dwelling-place, Werowocomoco. To this point Captain John Smith was brought a captive in 1608. His description of the topography sufficiently identifies the place, since he wrote that "the bay where he [Powhatan] dwelleth hath three creeks in it," and he clearly locates Werowocomoco at Purtan Bay on his famous map of Virginia.¹⁴

Due to the lack of vestry records antedating Bacon's Rebellion, the exact date of construction of Purtan Church is unknown, but it seems probable that it was built soon after the parish's formation, since it was in constant need of repair by 1682, and was reported to be "so decayed and Rotten that it is past Repare" in 1694. In the latter year, the vestry voted to build on the same site a new brick Lower Church, forty by twenty feet in the clear, with walls thirteen feet high, brick gable ends and "an english fraim'd Rooffe", covered with shingles. It was also decided not to build a projected chapel of

¹³ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XI, 75.

¹⁴ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), X, 2.

ease in the upper part of the parish, but no appropriation having been made in the next parish levy, the proposal for the new Lower Church's construction was ineffective. Two years later, the vestry resolved not to rebuild "the old Church that was gon to ruin" but that there should "be no other Church in the parish but popler Spring Church and that alwas to be kept in good repare." Following this decision, old Purtan Church was evidently abandoned, since the vestry book makes no further reference to it.

The foundation of this ancient church, abandoned nearly two and one half centuries ago, is still in existence, in a remarkable state of preservation, although the site has been under cultivation for many years. It is unmistakably that of a brick church, since the footings are three feet wide, and its outside dimensions appear to have been about forty-five by twenty-two feet, or almost the same as those of the projected brick church by which the vestry proposed to replace it.

The first Poplar Spring Church, which was built in 1677 as the second parish church of Petsworth, stood near the old main road leading to Middlesex and King and Queen Counties, on an elevation still known as Church Hill, about $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles northwest of the present Gloucester Court-house. This old road led up the hillside just east of the church, but has been replaced by a more direct modern highway passing west of the site through a deep cut.

The location is more nearly central in the parish than that of the earlier church, and an important factor in its selection was a fine spring, from which the church took its name. This spring was situated at the foot of the hill, south of the church, and on the opposite side of the old road, where it crossed Poplar Spring Swamp. It has long since filled up and disappeared, but a former resident in this locality, the late William C. Stubbs, has described it as a small, boiling spring of ice-cold water, which came out from beneath a giant tulip poplar tree, whose dead trunk was still standing, during Mr. Stubbs' boyhood.

It was in the new Poplar Spring churchyard, according to tradition, but much more plausibly in that of old Purtan Church, that the followers of Nathaniel Bacon, the Rebel, in 1676, buried a coffin supposed to contain his remains, but actually filled with stones. The subterfuge was prompted by the knowledge that savage old Governor Berkeley was not above taking revenge on his enemies by hanging their dead bodies in chains. It is also a matter of tradition that Bacon's body was secretly buried at night in a sealed leaden casket sunk to the bottom of Poropotank Creek.

Since the new church at Poplar Spring was already under construction at the opening of the Petsworth vestry book, the latter contains no record of the building's type and dimensions. It was evidently a frame structure, since repairs were later recorded to its weatherboarding, and a vestry order of the 4th October, 1677, gives interesting specifications for its interior joiner work.

These specifications provide "that the inside work of the Church now in Buildinge at poplare Spring bee done in manner as followeth, vizt. the walls and ceiling over head to be substantially Lathed, daubed & plastered; the Chancell to be 15 foote and a Screene to be runn a Crosse the church wth ballisters, 2 wainscoate double pews one of each side of the Chancell, Joyninge to the Screene with ballisters suitable to the Screene. 1: double pew above the pulpitt & deske, Joyninge to the Screene, all the rest of the pews of both sides of the said church to be double, and to be done wth wainscoate Backs."

The above details reveal that this seventeenth-century church's interior was distinguished by the rare and ornamental feature of a rood-screen, dividing the nave from the chancel. This screen was of wood, paneled to pew height, with closely-spaced turned balusters above, and probably resembled screens serving the same purpose in several contemporary churches of Middlesex County.¹⁵

The above order specifies further that the pulpit was "to be of wainscoate 4 foote diameter, & made with 6 sides, 6 foot allowed for the reading desks & passag into the pulpitt: the ministers pew to be under the pulpitt and raised 18 Inches and the readers deske under it, the two uppermost pews in the Body of the Church and the two pews in the Chancell to have doors." This appears to describe an early example of the "three-decker" pulpit, having the clerk's desk at the lowest level and above it the minister's pew and desk, from which he read the lesson before ascending to the lofty pulpit to preach.

The church was built by Samuel Duninge, but Major Thomas Pate, who may have been the "Dr. Pate" at whose house in Gloucester Nathaniel Bacon died, carried out the plastering and whitewashing. Upon completion of the new building, the vestry promptly sent for communion table cloths and cushions, and there was also put into service "a flowered Crimson velvett pulpit cloath," the bequest of James Clark. Other gifts included a large Bible, a book of common prayer, and another containing the homilies, articles and canons, all presented by the governor; there was also a silver communion service

¹⁵ See page 287.

composed of a flagon, two bowls, and two plates, left to the parish by the will of Augustine Warner. The four smaller pieces of this service are in use at Ware Church to this day, but the flagon is missing.¹⁶ There is a legend that it was lost while being filled at Poplar Spring by Parson Emanuel Jones, rector of Petsworth in 1700-1738, through the breakage of the knotted grapevine used to lower the flagon into its bottomless depths.

Embellishment of the new church by a mural painting, presumably an altar piece, is suggested by the payment of five hundred pounds of tobacco in 1679 to Thomas Powell "for draweing the Cherubin." Further interior decoration is implied in a similar payment in the same year to Robert Draper for "making the frame on which the King's armes are drawn", but the royal coat of arms may have been mounted on the outside of the church, as is known to have been done on at least one other colonial church.¹⁷

In 1680, the new building was shingled and further improved by the addition of "a good and substantiall Porch." Two years later, it had to be re-shingled, but in 1684 the vestry ended the trouble by covering the roof with rived boards instead of shingles and then tarring it. After the abandonment of the old Lower Church in 1696, Poplar Spring Church became over-crowded and was enlarged in 1701 by the construction of a wing twenty feet wide and twenty-five feet long, in the clear, making it a T-shaped building.

Our knowledge of the first Poplar Spring Church's size and arrangement has recently been supplemented by the discovery of the remains of its foundation, through the use of a sounding rod and partial excavation. The remains encountered consist of the trenches dug to remove the bricks of the foundation, these trenches having evidently been filled with the bricks broken in the removal, after which they were leveled off with a layer of earth. The shape and size of the building and the location of its north wing are definitely established by these soundings, which reveal it as a rectangular building sixty-six feet long by thirty-three feet wide, outside the foundation walls. It had a north wing of the size specified in the vestry book, placed with its west wall midway of the building's length and extending eastward twenty-five feet toward the chancel.

After more than forty years of service, this first frame church at Poplar Spring became inadequate for the congregation's needs, as a

¹⁶ Lee, *Colonial Churches of Virginia*, 203.

¹⁷ See page 111.

result of the increasing wealth and population of the parish. On the 18th January, 1720/1, the vestry therefore ordered that James Skelton should build a new brick church on the same site. The price set was £1190, to be paid in three annual installments of £350 each, the balance of £140 being due in 1724.

The vestry book gives no description of this new brick structure, the third Petsworth Parish Church, but the price paid for it, while not the highest recorded for a colonial church in Virginia, is enough to suggest that it must have been a large and handsome building. It was evidently in service on the 7th March, 1723, when the parish vestry ordered the old church to be pulled down and carried off the church land, and the churchyard to be cleaned up and leveled off around the new building. The Church was still unfinished at this date, but it must have been completed by the 24th June, 1723, since the vestry paid the balance of the purchase price on the 24th May in that year, and then gave the contractor another month to finish the building.

The order for pulling down the old church required the contractor for the new church to tar its roof well and "to cover the pediments over the doors with lead," revealing that it had the classic pedimented doorways typical of eighteenth-century brick churches in Virginia. The location of the pulpit "on the North side of the Church in the same place where it tis fixed" was also ordered by the vestry. Later references to leakage of "the Roofe of the Church Angles" seem to apply to the "valleys" between the gables of a cross-shaped building.

Evidence of the existence of a vestry house in the churchyard is given by a vestry order of 29th June, 1727, that the county court be asked to grant permission "for to turn the road back of the Vestry house by the Church". It seems probable that this vestry house was originally built by the contractor, James Skelton, in or adjoining the churchyard, as temporary quarters for himself, during the new church's erection, in order to facilitate his supervision of the work.

Upon completion of the church in June, 1723, the vestry agreed to pay Skelton the sum of £12 for this temporary dwelling, which he was to finish by lathing and plastering the walls, covering the roof with well-tarred heart-cypress boards and installing a door, two windows and a brick chimney-back. The purpose for which this little house was acquired is not stated in the record, but the existence of a "Vestry house by the Church", in 1727, points to this structure's having been purchased to fill the need for such building.

Soon after the completion of the second Poplar Spring Church, the vestry book records a project for the purchase of an organ, which for a time threatened to impair, rather than improve, the harmony of the congregation. The record of this project begins with a memorandum of the 8th April, 1735, that "At this Vestory There was Great Subscriptions made by the Present Vestory for an Organ to be Purchas^d for the Use of the Church of Petsworth." Following this, on the 13th June of the same year, it was "Ord'd that Augustine Smith receive money given for purchase of Organ and send for As Good An Organ As the Said Money shall purchase in Great Britaine and to have the Same Ensured [against] the Danger of the Seas."

As two full years were required for the organ to be built and to complete its long sea voyage from the mother country, preparation for its reception could safely be postponed for more than a year after its order. On the 16th February, 1736/7, the vestry agreed with William Rand to "Build a Good & Substantial Gallery at the west End of the Church at Popler Spring for the Use of placing an Organ, Winscoted painted hansom and Substantiall, Well Built, Workman like," for a price of £40.

It was upon the arrival of the organ in April, 1737, that discord developed, as a result of the subscribers' discovery that their subscriptions had far exceeded the actual cost of the instrument. Legal action was even threatened against Mr. Smith, for recovery of the difference, in spite of his high standing as churchwarden. Harmony was finally restored by the vestry's diplomatic suggestion "that the Overplush of the Mony in the hands of M^r Augⁿ Smith Ought to be Apropriated towards the Suport and Maintenance of the said Organ." To back up their suggestion, the vestry authorized Mr. Smith to employ an attorney to defend the case in court, using the disputed money to pay for his services, whereupon the subscribers unanimously agreed, in writing, to the proposed use of the "Overplush."

The first use of this organ fund was the employment of Anthony Collins as the church's organist, on the 29th June, 1737, "he duly Officiating in the Said office & Oblidging himsel to Teach Som Other fit person in the Mistory of the Said Musick with all Convenient Speed he Can." The extent of the surplus contributions composing the fund may be judged from the fact that the latter was not exhausted, even after paying the organist's salary for four years at £20 per annum. The final note in this musical interlude was sounded when Mr. Smith was granted by the vestry a 7½ per cent commission on

the money subscribed, and demonstrated his good intentions by donating the entire commission to the organ fund.

Although few other contemporary churches in Virginia could boast of an organ, Poplar Spring Church was even more notable for the elaborate mural painting adorning its chancel. This beautification of the church was first undertaken in June, 1738, when the vestry ordered that Mr. Samuel Peacock "hansomly paint the Aulter peace of Popler Spring Church." This order was supplemented by a request that Mr. Augustine Smith, churchwarden, "Send for 700 Leaves of Leafe Gould for the Use of the Aulter peace," which Mr. Smith agreed to do for a 5 per cent commission on their cost.

The local painter having apparently proved unequal to the job, a capable artist was secured in the person of Richard Cooke, an indentured servant, who was hired from his lawful master, Mr. Charles Carter, for £40. No details of the mural painting's design are given in the agreement with Cooke, which merely calls for "the Aulter peace to be Neatly Painted; the Ground Work of the Pannels to be Japannd; the Creed Lords Prayor & Ten Comandments to be Done in a Leagable hand In fair Gold letters, And All the Carving work to be Guilded." This specification would apply to the conventional pedimented reredos typical of colonial churches, but it is evident, from a description quoted by Bishop Meade, that the artist's work far exceeded the apparent scope of the order.

This description is by an unnamed feminine informant, who had visited the ruined Poplar Spring Church as a child, with her mother, who had pointed out "the remains of the fine painting over what had been the chancel." She continues: "I remember a broad cornice, painted with the resemblance of a bright blue sky and clouds rolling off on either hand; below this were fragments of the plaster, extending farther down at the corners, and representing an immense curtain drawn back. . . . There used to be an angel just where the curtain was drawn on one side with a trumpet in his hand, and rolling on toward him were vast bodies of clouds with angels in them. . . . On passing it in later years, all trace of the bright colours had departed."¹⁸

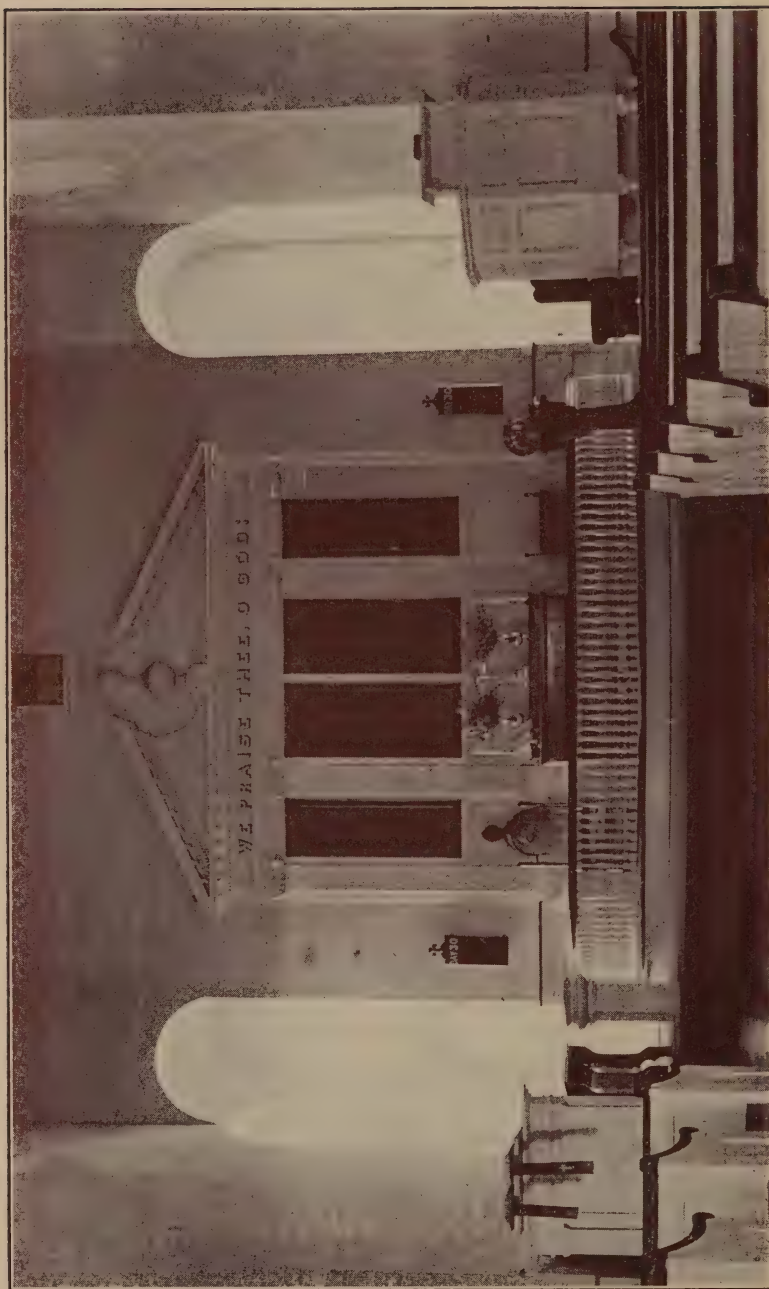
Further evidence of the richness with which the last Poplar Spring Church was furnished is found in a vestry order of 4th September, 1751, authorizing Mr. Augustine Smith to "Send to England for a Pulpit [Cloth] and Table Cloth and Cushon for the use of Petsworth Parish Church . . . the Cloth to be of Crimson Velvet with a Gold

¹⁸ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 203.



PLATE 53

Abingdon Church, west doorway.



Freinge and Lace, to come in a Very Strong Oak Chest for the use of the Parish." Two years elapsed before these ornaments were received, and Mr. Smith was allowed a 50 per cent commission on their first cost.

The ruinous condition of the church, as described above, was the result of its abandonment, perhaps only a few years after the close of the vestry record in 1793, during the general decline of religion in Virginia, following the Revolutionary War and the downfall of the Established Church. No deed having ever been made for the site, it was claimed by the owner of the adjoining land, who sold his "rights" in the ruins, and in 1820, the walls were leveled and the bricks removed, to build the first Hygeia Hotel at Old Point Comfort. This piece of vandalism is vividly related by Bishop Meade, who takes comfort in adding that the hotel was struck by lightning and injured, before its completion.¹⁹

From the extent of the broken bricks still covering the site, in some places piled several feet high, it appears that the church was a large, cross-shaped building, about eighty feet long, from east to west, and seventy feet wide, from north to south, or slightly smaller than the present Abingdon Church. It is also apparent, from soundings made on the spot, that the church's massive foundation has been completely dug up and carried away, the resulting deep and wide trenches having been back-filled with dirt and broken bricks, so that they cannot be distinguished from the brick-covered ground.

Three tombstone slabs, representing burials within the churchyard wall, still remain at the site, and an upright gravestone of the colonial period stands near the historical highway marker by the roadside. One of the three tombstones within the churchyard is that of Parson Emanuel Jones, rector of Petsworth for thirty-eight years until his death in 1738, and another is that of his son Thomas.

In accordance with the hypothesis of an earlier historian, it has been generally accepted that the first church in Abingdon Parish must have stood near Tyndall's Point, now known as Gloucester Point, overlooking the waters of Sarah's Creek.²⁰ The same writer suggests that the earliest religious services in Gloucester were held at this hypothetical first church by ministers of Chiskiack Parish, within whose borders he assumes Tyndall's Point to have been located.²¹

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 322.

²⁰ Lee, *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, 181.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 179.

It is evident from the limits set for Chiskiack Parish by the Act creating it, whose full text has recently been published, that this parish never extended beyond the present limits of York County.²² It seems improbable, therefore, that its clergymen would hold services, outside of the parish bounds, for the benefit of settlers who could attend the existing churches at York and Chiskiack by merely crossing the river.

Since the existence of this early Gloucester church is based solely on conjecture, unsupported by documentary evidence, tradition or probability, it can scarcely be accepted as historical. The assumption that there must have been such a church seems especially unnecessary, because the lapse of time between formation of the county and parish and the accepted date of erection of the first known church, in the case of Abingdon Parish, seems to have been no greater than in the neighboring counties and parishes.

The first known parish church of Abingdon seems to have been erected about 1660, and stood close to the site of the present Abingdon Church, near the old main road from Gloucester Point to the county court-house and six miles north of the former place. In accordance with early colonial practice, this church was also accessible by water, as it lay near the head of the Northwest Branch of Severn River. Its site, with an area of half an acre, traditionally was donated to the parish by Augustine Warner of Warner Hall.²³

The foundation of this first Abingdon Church is still plainly evident in the southeast angle of the present cross-shaped building, one corner being actually exposed to view at the surface of the ground. The sounding rod shows this foundation to be twenty-seven inches thick, indicating that it belonged to a brick building, which must have been a small one, having an outside width of only twenty-three feet. It has been suggested that this first church was once enlarged,²⁴ and this is confirmed by evidence of a transverse wall seven feet from the east end. The northwest corner of the foundation runs in under the south transept of the present building, and the west end of the old church is not well defined, but its length appears to have been originally about forty-five feet, later increased to fifty-two feet, outside dimensions.

The date generally accepted for this early church's construction seems to have been derived from a tradition, first related by Sally

²² *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), IV, 255.

²³ Lee, *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, 181.

²⁴ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 329.

Nelson Robins in 1894,²⁵ and handed down by Robert A. Lancaster in 1915,²⁶ that a brick in the older portion of Abingdon Church is marked 1660. Since the present church was manifestly built as a unit and has no older portion, it appears that this tradition must have referred to a brick in the wall of the earlier Abingdon Church, especially since the above date could not possibly have had any significance in connection with the existing building, as will be shown later.

The first Abingdon Church must have been a building of superlative excellence, since two contemporary travellers have expressed in their journals the highest praise of its architectural quality. The earlier of these writers, the Swiss traveller Francis Louis Michel, states in his diary that, in 1702, while on his way to visit a Swiss Huguenot colony in King and Queen County, he "saw the Closter [Gloucester] Church, standing solitary in the forest, which I have already mentioned as one of the most beautiful, built of bricks."²⁷ The building thus praised was undoubtedly the first Abingdon church, which stood then, as its successor stands today, on "the great high road" also mentioned by Michel, leading to King and Queen County.

The other traveller was the second William Byrd, who records in his secret diary for November 6th, 1709, that "about 11 o'clock we rode to the church of Abingdon Parish which is the best church I have seen in the country."²⁸ Since Byrd was undoubtedly familiar with several fine contemporary brick churches, such as Merchant's Hope, St. Peter's, and the Jamestown Church, this was high praise.

The evident architectural beauty and distinction of this first Abingdon Church may account for its continuance in use, long after the three other colonial parishes of Gloucester County had replaced their earlier churches with large brick buildings. After ninety years of service, this tiny gem of a church became unsafe for use, as well as unequal to the needs of the parish, and the vestry decided to replace it with a larger building. This decision was fortunately recorded in the following advertisement in the Virginia Gazette of 14th February, 1751: "Notice is hereby given, on Wednesday, 27th day of this month, a vestry will be held at Abingdon Church in the county of Gloucester, in order to contract with workmen for building a new church in said parish."

²⁵ Robins, *Gloucester*, 10.

²⁶ Lancaster, *Historic Virginia Homes and Churches*, 256.

²⁷ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XXIV, 115.

²⁸ Wright & Tinling, *Secret Diary of William Byrd*.

The building whose construction was proposed in this advertisement is evidently the present Abingdon Church, which may be accepted as the second church of the parish. The exact date of its completion is unknown, but is approximately indicated by two inscriptions on the west wall of the building. One of these inscriptions, which is so high up in the brickwork that it could only have been cut from the scaffolding, during construction of the walls, reads "BR June 30, 1754." The other, cut in the rubbed brick trim of the southwest corner of the nave, reads "WB 1755," and probably denotes the year of the building's completion. The latter is, possibly, the inscription to which a former rector referred (perhaps from memory and hence erroneously) when he wrote Bishop Meade that "the date 1765 is cut on the arch of the door,"²⁹ but the former existence of this date cannot now be disproved, since the arch's brickwork has been largely replaced in the course of repairs to the building.

The present Abingdon Church stands in a beautiful grove of walnut and hickory trees, which now covers the historic site of the first church of the parish. It is possible to trace with a sounding rod the footings of the colonial brick walls, marking the north and south ends of the original half-acre churchyard donated by Augustine Warner, and its other two walls appear to be still in service. As in the case of Ware Church, this original churchyard was about one hundred sixty feet square, but it was enlarged at the south end in colonial times and the wall extended to enclose it. About forty years ago, a descendant of Augustine Warner, Mrs. Robert C. Selden, added an acre of land to the north end of the churchyard, and this new section was enclosed with a brick wall of the same colonial design by Mr. Joseph Bryan of nearby Eagle Point.³⁰

Abingdon Church is one of the noblest surviving examples of the cruciform colonial church in Virginia. Its shape is that of a Latin cross, with the projections of transept and chancel all of equal length, and the nave slightly longer. The over-all dimensions are eighty feet six inches, east to west, by seventy-five feet six inches, north to south. All four arms of the cross are of the same width, thirty-five feet six inches, outside; the chancel and transept wings are twenty feet long, and the nave twenty-five feet. Abingdon's side walls are twenty-seven feet high, with a nineteen-foot pitch of roof, and they are three brick lengths, or about twenty-seven inches, thick. The eaves are extended

²⁹ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 329.

³⁰ Lee, *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, 184.

across the face of each brick gable. The Flemish-bond brickwork is of surpassing quality and its decorative pattern is carried down to grade level.

Like other cross-shaped churches, Abingdon has a main entrance in the west end of the nave, and secondary entrances in the north and south ends of the transept. There are two windows in each side of the nave and in the east end of the chancel, and one in each side of the chancel and of each wing of the transept. All three doorways are fine examples of the classic pedimented type, and all the door and window trim is of the conventional rubbed and gauged brick. Abingdon Church is further distinguished by the possession of unusually handsome wooden door frames and window casings, most of them original, with fluted jambs and keyed arches. All the doors, with their hand-wrought hardware, as well as the window fanlights, appear to be original, but only one complete window seems to have retained its colonial sash, with heavy muntins and antique crown glass, although there are single original sash in several windows.

As originally built, Abingdon Church had aisles eight feet wide, paved with flagstones two feet square, and extending down the middle of the nave and transept. At each side of these aisles and raised one step above them, were paneled pews of high box type, about seven by eleven feet in size, with narrow seats along the back and sides, and a door that opened on the aisle. These box pews still remain at each side of the west doorway and in the two transept galleries, at the rear of which a high bench was provided for the use of colored servants. In colonial times, the north gallery was occupied by the Pages and Burwells, and the south gallery by the Thruston and Lewis families. The chancel was in the east end, as at present, and the high colonial pulpit stood near the southeast interior angle of the cross-shaped building.³¹

During the general decline of religion in the state, Abingdon is not recorded as having been abandoned, although, together with Ware, it was without a minister for a decade, following the year 1817. The old church was thoroughly repaired in 1841, at which time the existing reredos, of colonial type and feeling, is believed to have been placed in the chancel, which then extended to the eastern end of the building.³²

³¹ Lee, *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, 182.

³² *Ibid.*, 183.

During part of the interim between 1817 and 1841, Abingdon Church was in regular use by the Methodists, as one of the churches of their Gloucester Circuit. This fact is recorded by a Methodist historian, the Rev. D. G. C. Butts, in the following words: " 'Abingdon Chapel' was an abandoned Colonial church, used by the Methodists for several years, because the state of religion among the [Episcopal] Church people was at such a low ebb [that] there was no organization, no congregation, and no rector: so the Methodists served the people with the word and the Sacraments, until the house was taken up by the Episcopalians and put in thorough repair, and has since been used by them until this day."³³ This occupation of the old church by the Methodists is authenticated by the minutes of their Gloucester Circuit, which show that it extended from 1818 until 1833, and possibly longer.³⁴

Following the War Between the States, even more extensive repairs were required, the ancient box pews having been so badly wrecked, through use as horse stalls by the Federal troops, that they were taken out and replaced by modern pews. During these changes, the flagstones were taken up and the aisles floored over, and the colonial pulpit was replaced by a modern one, while the entire chancel was partitioned off, to form a vestry room. A claim against the United States government for the amount of these damages was finally paid, nearly half a century after the war.

In 1897, the massive rafters becoming unsafe, the roof was entirely rebuilt, and the present chancel partition was erected, allowing the pulpit to be placed in the position formerly occupied by its colonial predecessor. A modern furnace was installed and chimneys provided for it.³⁵ The present interior of Abingdon Church, although much altered from its original colonial appearance, is impressive and beautiful in its simplicity.

The colonial glebe house, or rectory, of Abingdon Parish is still in existence within the bounds of the present Ware Parish. Evidence that it also was situated within the colonial Ware Parish is found in a report made in 1724 to the Bishop of London by the Reverend Thomas Hughes, rector of Abingdon Parish. In this report, Mr. Hughes states that "The Glebe belonging to Abingdon Parish lying in the adjoining parish of Weare, [I] can't be resident, but am as near

³³ Butts, *From Saddle to City*, 341.

³⁴ Minute Book now at Bellamy Museum, Gloucester County, Virginia.

³⁵ Lee, *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, 183.

and convenient to the Church as most, computed as 4 short miles".³⁶

It is apparent from General Court records, dated a half century prior to this report, that some confusion resulted from the location of the Abingdon glebe in another parish. This led the churchwarden of Ware Parish to take the law into his own hands, by forcible collection of the tithes he considered due from Abingdon's rector, and the case was taken to court.

The minutes of the General Court held on the 26th September, 1674, record that "Mr. Henry Whiting Churchwarden of Ware Pish . . . did illegally breake open the Tob^o house of Mr. John Gwyn minister of Abingdon Pish and also breake open a Hoggshead of Tob^o and take Pt [part] of same away . . . This Court doth therefore order that the said Mr. Hen: Whiteing pay unto the said Mr. John Gwinn 1600 pound tobacco and caske . . . that Mr. Gwyn be noe more molested by neither Pish until it be decided in which Pish he lives in".³⁷

The old glebe house stands well back from the highway on the west side of U. S. Route 17, about three and one half miles north of Abingdon Church and the same distance south of Ware Church. Architecturally, it is one of the most interesting colonial brick houses in the county, and appears to date from the last quarter of the seventeenth century, if not earlier. The glebe buildings and lands were confiscated by legislative act in 1802, and the old house is now the property of Mr. Lamberth.³⁸

Due to the loss of county and parish records, no date can be assigned for the erection of the first known church of Ware Parish, but it probably took place soon after the parish was formed. This early church stood on the north side of Ware River, near the old county road leading down into Ware Neck. The churchyard has ever since been protected from cultivation and the site is still known as the Church Field. It is part of Glen Roy plantation, once the home of the Deans, Roys and Smiths, and now the residence of the Wellford and Boush families. On the same estate there is also a Glebe Point, presumably recording the location of the first glebe lands of Ware Parish, on which it would have been customary for the first parish church to have been built.³⁹

In the field adjoining the churchyard there are evident traces of the old church's foundation, which was probably a slender brick un-

³⁶ Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 308.

³⁷ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General and General Court*, 381.

³⁸ Lee, *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, 185.

³⁹ Lee, *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, 193.

derpinning for a frame building. The ancient churchyard is marked by a clump of trees, a few old bricks and a badly weathered tombstone, recording the burial of William Potter on the 29th January, 1706. A second tombstone, mentioned by previous writers, has since disappeared.

One of the few early Gloucester county records, other than land grants, is an application dated 28th November, 1681, to the general court of the colony, for another church in Ware Parish.⁴⁰ It has been assumed by an earlier parish historian that the present Ware Church was built as a result of this action and he further concludes that it was built within the next ten years.⁴¹ Since the publication of these assumptions, it has been generally accepted that the church was built in 1690-1693, but this date evidently has no historical basis, especially since the wording of the application of 1681 indicates that the petitioners actually wished to have two churches in Ware Parish instead of only one.

It is traditional that the present Ware Church was erected on land granted for the purpose by the Throckmorton family, once owners of the neighboring plantation of Church Hill.⁴² It has been suggested that the church site was donated to the parish by Gabriel Throckmorton, following his marriage in 1690 to Frances Cooke, daughter of Mordecai Cooke, original owner of the plantation, then known as Mordecai's Mount.⁴³ A better authenticated account of this tradition⁴⁴ indicates that the property did not pass out of the Cooke family until the marriage of the widow of the fourth Mordecai Cooke of Mordecai's Mount to Robert Throckmorton, following the death of the latter's first wife in 1748.⁴⁵

Nothing conclusive can be deduced from either version of the traditional gift of its site, and, contrary to the implications of the date last mentioned, there is definite proof that the present building was built not later than 1723. Such proof is afforded by a tombstone bearing that date, which lies in the churchyard close to the east end of the building. This stone marks the burial of the Rev. James Clack, during whose ministry the church must have been constructed, since he served as rector of the parish from 1679 until his death. Its evidence

⁴⁰ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 521.

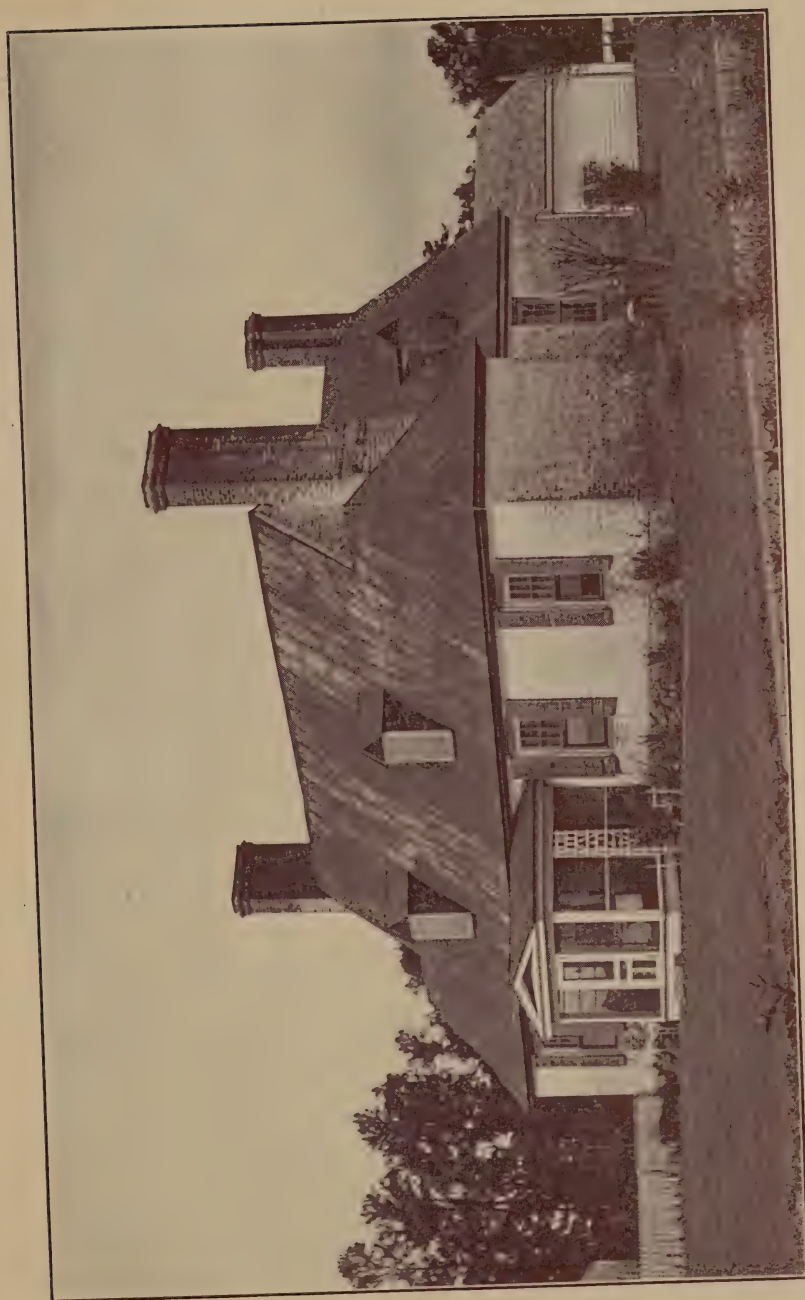
⁴¹ Lee, *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, 193.

⁴² *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XI, 251.

⁴³ Lee, *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, 193.

⁴⁴ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XI, 251.

⁴⁵ Stubbs, *Descendants of Mordecai Cooke*, 172.



Glebe house of Abingdon Parish.



PLATE 56

Ware Church.

is supported by the dates 1725 and 1727 on two stones in the chancel of the church, the former recording the burial of the wife of Mr. Clack's successor, the Rev. John Richards. It was the valued privilege of a colonial minister and his family to be buried near the altar of the church he had served, and these stones, therefore, cannot be accounted for as having been moved from an earlier churchyard.

From an architectural standpoint, a date not many years before 1723 is suggested by Ware Church's classic pedimented doorways, although they have certain primitive features which appear to justify their acceptance as the earliest examples of the kind in this state. While almost a standard detail of later eighteenth-century churches, doorways of this type are not found on the other ten surviving Virginia colonial churches believed to have been built before 1719. It has already been brought out that the doorways of the third Petsworth Church of 1723 were of pedimented design, but this appears to be the earliest record of their use on a Virginia colonial church. A pedimented doorway closely similar in proportion to Ware Church's north and south entrances may be seen on Elsing Green mansion, in King William County, built by William Dandridge in 1717.

On the basis of its architectural design, a date somewhere in the second decade of the eighteenth century, for Ware Church's construction, seems reasonable, but cannot be proved. This supposition is supported by William Byrd's praise of the first Abingdon Church, already quoted, since it seems hardly credible that he would have rated this tiny brick church "the best . . . in the country" in 1709, if the large and magnificent Ware Church had then been in existence only six miles away.

The second Ware Church is located not far from the head of Ware River, on the south side of the main road to Mathews County and about $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles from Gloucester Court-house. It stands in a churchyard of surpassing beauty, filled with fine trees and framed in a natural woodland setting. The oldest part of this churchyard is enclosed by a colonial brick wall of great antiquity and probably represents the original site for the church. This enclosure is about one hundred sixty feet square, comprising a half acre of land, but the churchyard has been enlarged in modern times by the addition of several acres west and south of the church. It is recorded that a brigade of Continental infantry encamped at Ware Church during the last year of the Revolutionary War.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ *Calendar of State Papers*, II, 485, 486, 497.

No finer example of the rectangular colonial church exists in Virginia today than Ware Church, which is remarkable both for the thickness of its walls and the perfection of its Flemish-bond brickwork. These walls are twenty-six feet high to the eaves, with gables of twenty-foot pitch. Their thickness, above the water table, is four brick lengths, or more than three feet, and they rest on foundations three feet nine inches thick, above ground, with footings five feet thick, below. Leaving out of account the massive brickwork of some early church towers, these Ware Church walls are only approached in thickness by those of Christ Church in Lancaster County, among the other surviving colonial Virginia churches, all the rest having upper walls only two to three brick lengths through and foundations not over three and a half bricks thick. The decorative pattern of the Flemish-bond masonry, set off by glazed blue headers, is carried down through the foundation to ground level, in Ware Church's walls.

The building measures eighty feet nine inches by forty feet nine inches, outside the upper walls, or seventy-four feet six inches by thirty-four feet six inches, in the clear. There are three doorways, one of them the main doorway which was conventionally provided in the west end of a colonial church, and the other two, secondary entrances in the north and south sides, near the east end. These doorways are described and illustrated in a later chapter.⁴⁷ Five circular-headed windows are fitted in each side of the church, and there are two more, of double width, in the east end. All door and window trim is of rubbed red brick, gauged and set in lime putty. A notable feature of the window design is the inclined sill, which is built at the proper angle to admit light through the deep window embrasures. Many of the window sashes seem original and are still set with antique crown glass, while the west and south outside doors have much of their hand-wrought hardware and apparently date from colonial times.

In the original interior arrangement of Ware Church, the chancel occupied the east end, in accordance with custom, and a servants' gallery, the west end. There were four rows of medium high box pews in the body of the church, comprising a single row along the north and south walls, and a double row, end to end, down the middle of the building. Two longitudinal aisles extended the full length of the nave, dividing the wall pews from those on the center line. These aisles were connected by two cross aisles, one running between the two side doors, and the other across the west end, under the gallery.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ See pages 358, 359.

⁴⁸ Lee, *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, 194.

The pews and chancel had wooden floors, raised one step above the aisles, which were six feet wide and paved with flagstones about eighteen inches square, laid directly on the ground. At each side of the chancel was a long, narrow pew about three feet six inches wide, with a seat along the wall and a door in the middle of the opposite side. Against the east wall of the church stood the communion table, the space around it being raised a step or two above the rest of the chancel, and enclosed by the communion rail. This rail was set back from the side pews far enough to leave a passage to them, and a similar passage extended across in front of the enclosed space. Between the chancel and the cross aisle was a row of tombstones, laid flush with the aisle, marking burials made within the church. Between the south door and the next window to the west, stood the high "wine-glass" pulpit beneath its sounding board. Access to the pulpit must have been by a narrow stair leading up behind it from the cross aisle, and in front of it was probably placed the clerk's desk.

Some idea of the richness of Ware Church's colonial furnishings is given by an advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* of 29th May, 1752, offering a reward for the return of articles stolen from Ware Church, including a pulpit cloth and a communion-table cloth, both of crimson velvet, double-laced with gold.⁴⁹

Like many other colonial church buildings, Ware Church suffered from the general decline of religion in Virginia, during the early part of the nineteenth century, having been abandoned for about a decade, beginning in 1817. Even before and after this period of abandonment, the building was occasionally used by the Methodists, their Convocations of 1806⁵⁰ and 1837⁵¹ having been held at Ware Church, according to the recorded minutes of these meetings. Toward the end of this period, the old building's doors stood open, and passing travelers and animals took shelter from the weather within its walls. The church was repaired and services resumed in 1827.⁵²

The inside arrangement of Ware Church was modernized in 1854 and its handsome and impressive colonial interior was replaced by one more comfortable but far less interesting. This remodelling was prompted, no doubt, by the bad condition of the ancient woodwork

⁴⁹ *William and Mary Quarterly* (1), XII, 218.

⁵⁰ Minutes of this Convocation, now in the Bellamy Museum, Gloucester County, Virginia.

⁵¹ Butts, *From Saddle to City*, 347.

⁵² Lee, *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, 199.

and the dampness caused by the stone-paved aisles, but it was largely an expression of the spirit of change prevalent at that period, which led to the destructive alteration of other historic buildings, under the guise of improvement. It is to the credit of the good taste of Ware's congregation that this modernization met with strong opposition.⁵³

In the course of these alterations, the wooden flooring of the chancel and pews was extended above the ancient tombstones and over the former aisles, the flagstones being taken up and used for walks in the churchyard. The old high box pews were replaced by two blocks of modern pews, located so as to form three longitudinal aisles, one at each wall and one down the middle of the church. The lofty colonial pulpit was removed and one of modern design installed at the south side of the chancel. Among the few colonial features retained were the two chancel pews, but a small robing room was built in the south-east corner of the church, shortening one of them by several feet. A much needed new roof was put on the building.⁵⁴

This remodelled interior doubtless suffered heavy damage during the War Between the States, when the churchyard was used as a camping ground by the Federal troops. It was thoroughly repaired before 1878 and has been improved, from time to time, since that date. A new slate roof was added in 1902, over the original massive rafters, which were found to be still in excellent condition, and a plaster ceiling of colonial design was installed. The old corner pews and robing room were removed from the chancel, and the vestibule under the gallery enlarged to provide a robing room at each side of the aisle. The present reredos is modern, but frames a tablet taken from an old church in Baltimore, which was remodelled at the time of the War Between the States. Ware Church has been provided with heating and lighting facilities, and its interior, which has recently been handsomely redecorated, is dignified and beautiful.

At the formation of Mathews County in 1791, it was made coterminous with the colonial parish of Kingston. The vestry record preserved for Kingston Parish consists of two incomplete vestry books, the first extending from 1679 to 1725, and the second from 1740 to 1796. It is evident that these two manuscripts, now bound together, were not originally parts of the same book, since the earlier record is of vestry meetings in North River Precinct of Kingston parish, while the later one covers similar proceedings for the entire parish. The

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 194.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 205.

combined vestry books have been transcribed and edited by the late Dr. Churchill G. Chamberlayne, and the volume has been published by him as one of a valuable series of parish records.⁵⁵

In colonial Virginia, the parish vestry was typically aristocratic in character, being composed of the wealthiest and most prominent men in the parish, but the North River Precinct vestry seems to have been remarkably democratic in its organization. The first order in the precinct vestry book is signed by the "Vestry and Neighborhood" and subsequent entries are headed "At a Meeting of the Vestrymen and inhabitants of the North River Precinct." The "inhabitants" had at least one representative, whose signature was subscribed, with those of the vestry, to each order issued. This unique arrangement has been explained on the theory that the precinct vestrymen, representing a minority of the parish's governing body, only had authority to consult with the inhabitants on local matters, and required their consent to any action taken. In practice, it resulted in a truly democratic governing body for the precinct, capable of issuing orders for strictly local improvements, and of laying tax levies to make them effective.

The first order in the older vestry book, dated 15th November, 1679, reveals the existence of a church building for the precinct, since it refers to payment for trees cut on the land of Thomas Tabb "for the Reparacon of the North River Chapell." The site of this chapel is mentioned in a renewal patent of the 5th September, in the above year, to Richard Creadle for 220 acres "on North River side adjoining and beginning at Thomas Tabb's corner, to a corner ash at the head of the branch by the chappell".⁵⁶ No patent has been found for Tabb's land, but a survey plat of 1733 indicates that it consisted of 110 acres, leased from Thomas Peyton of "Isleham", and extending from Blackwater Creek to the North River Mill Road in the vicinity of the chapel.⁵⁷ Creadle's ownership of this property is commemorated by the name of the present Cradle Point.

This chapel, probably a frame building, apparently stood on the site of a later church of the same name, at the head of a little cove on the east side of North River. Directly opposite the cove is Toddsbury plantation. The chapel's site, now part of the John Sanders farm, is two miles south of the highway bridge over North End Creek, one of the headwaters of North River. In commemoration of its existence,

⁵⁵ Chamberlayne, *Vestry Book of Kingston Parish*.

⁵⁶ *Patent Book VII*, 220.

⁵⁷ *Gloucester County Surveyor's Book*, 1733-1810.

the neck of land between North River and Blackwater Creek is still called Chapel Neck. No date can be definitely assigned for this chapel's construction, but it was already old enough in 1679 to require repair.

At a meeting on the 14th October, 1680, it was "Ordered by the full consent of the Vestrymen and Inhabitants that Mr. James Ranson be pay'd out of the p^rcinct One thousand pds. of Tob^o for a great Bible & two Common prayer Bookes for the use of the North River Chappell" and these books were required to be kept in "a Chest wth a lock and key to it."

Increasing need of repairs on the old chapel led the vestry to replace it by a new building in 1687, the first record of their intention being a pledge, dated 13th June, by Mr. Michael Zyperus, minister, "to give fitt & Convenient Glasse for the window at the Gable End of the New Chappell to be built for the Northern p^rcinc." The type of the new structure is revealed by successive levies of tobacco "for & toward the payment for the new Brick Chappell now in building in the aforesd P^rcinct." It was under construction for at least five years, as the final payment to Edward Malen, its builder, was not made until 9th October, 1692.

The chapel's completion was followed by the authorization of a private pew in its chancel for the family of Captain James Ranson, churchwarden. He was later asked to send to England for a green pulpit cloth and cushion, the cloth to be embroidered with the initials of the parish and precinct. As in the case of a contemporary church in Middlesex County, there is a suggestion that window glass was at that time set with lead rather than putty, in a payment for "a box of leed sawder and glass" in connection with "mending the Chappell windows." The chapel was re-shingled and repaired in 1704-5, and it was apparently not found necessary to provide a lock for its door until 1725, when it had already been in service for thirty-three years.

The old building seems to have fallen into disuse long before the Revolution and then into ruin, and its site, for many years under cultivation, has now reverted to woodland and is covered with pine trees. An almost impenetrable growth of briars guards the spot and renders futile any attempt to locate the old chapel's foundation, although it is said to be still in existence, having been frequently struck by the plowshare when this land was under cultivation.

Toward the close of the earlier part of the Kingston vestry book, we find the first indication that the parish had more than one church

building, in the record of "a vestry held the 29th of September, 1715, at the Eastermost River Church." This record is amplified by an early entry in the second part of the vestry book, dated 29th September, 1740, and ordering a levy "for the Churches now in building." Subsequent orders make it clear that only one of the churches mentioned was a new structure, the other being an old church under repair and improvement. Further references to these two churches as the New Church and Old Church, or the Upper Church and Lower Church, fail to indicate their respective locations, and, to complete the confusion, a record of 1744 in regard to "the Eastermost Church" gives no clue as to its identity with either of the other buildings.

A partial solution of the puzzle is found in a vestry order of 1761, appointing Isabella Parrott sexton of the Upper Church and John Davis sexton of the Old Church. This clearly identifies the Upper Church as the one called new, thus indicating the Lower Church as the old one.

It is definitely known, moreover, that the present Trinity Church and Christ Church, modern Episcopal structures in Kingston Parish, both stand upon the sites of colonial houses of worship, which must have been the two churches mentioned in the vestry book.⁵⁸ The fact that the church building in North River Precinct is always designated as "the Chapel," in the precinct's vestry record, is conclusive evidence that a parish church was in service from the opening of this vestry book in 1679, since no parish church was ever called a chapel in colonial times, and no church was called a chapel unless some other church was serving as the parish church.

In records of the colonial period, we find that the terms "upper" and "lower," as applied to counties, parishes, and churches, bore no relation to points of the compass on a map, but were always based upon the density of population or chronological order of settlement. Thus, "lower" was associated with the first-settled or more populous section and "upper" with the frontier of the parish, remote from these early settlements.

A study of the land grants in colonial Gloucester County, recently made by Polly Cary Mason, clearly shows which part of Kingston Parish was its lower section. The distribution of these land grants, when plotted on a map of the county, reveals that, prior to June, 1654, the preponderance of settlement adjacent to and south of Christ

⁵⁸ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 326.

Church, over that surrounding the site of Trinity, was nearly two to one, both in acreage and in number of grants.

This evidence appears to justify the belief that the colonial predecessor of Christ Church was the Lower Church of the parish, because of its location in this first-settled and hence more populous region. Support for this view is found in the fact that Christ Church, up to the date of its last rebuilding, was always called Kingston Church, indicating that it was the mother church of the parish, usually found in its older or so-called lower portion.

The above conclusion is confirmed by a survey plat, apparently made during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, of Mr. Armistead Churchill's plantation known as Old Town, in what is now Mathews County. This plat shows the headwaters of East River, with a church in the fork of the western branch, which is labeled "this branch runs up to the New Church".⁵⁹ Since this fork encloses the exact site of the present Trinity Church, this identifies its colonial predecessor as the New Church and therefore also as the upper one.

A significant indication of the identity of Trinity's predecessor with the New Church of the vestry book is also found in the Kingston Parish register, which records that the Reverend John Dixon, rector of the parish until his retirement in 1770, was buried on the 19th May, 1771, at the New Church, while the tombstone of his wife, Lucy Dixon, dated 26th November, 1769, is still to be seen in Trinity churchyard. It seems obviously improbable that a colonial minister and his wife would have been buried at different churchyards, especially as both would have had the privilege of burial side by side in the chancel of the New Church. Mrs. Dixon's stone has been moved from its original position, since it no longer lies east and west, according to colonial custom, but it seems likely that it was taken from the abandoned chancel of the former church only a short distance from the stone's present location.

Although the sites of both colonial churches of Kingston Parish are close to East River, it seems logical that the Lower Church, being the oldest church near that river, would have been the first to be known by its name. It therefore appears that the colonial predecessor of Christ Church was the building mentioned in the precinct vestry record of 1715 as "the Eastermost River Church". From the similarity of names, this building must have been the same as "the Eastermost

⁵⁹ At William and Mary College Library, in archives of Lilly-Billups-Stokes families.

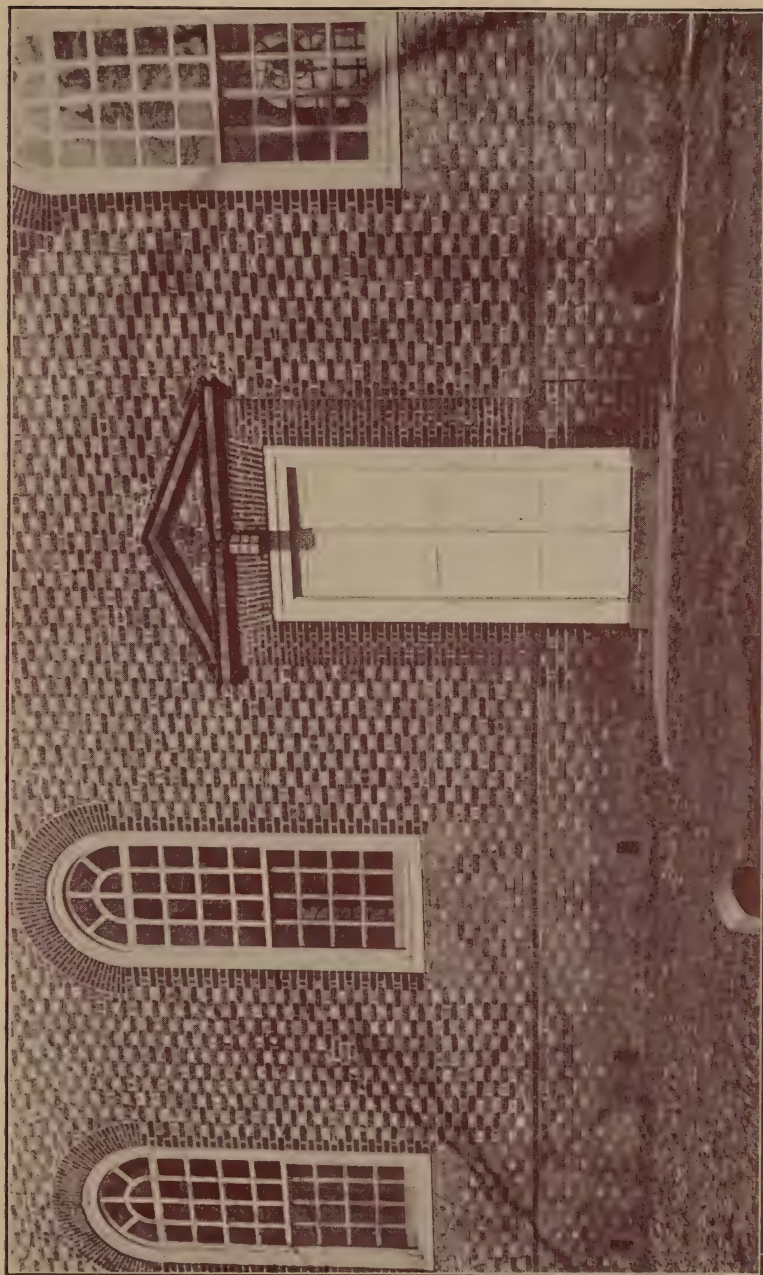




PLATE 58

Ware Church, interior.

Church", just as "North Precinct" was often used for "North River Precinct" in its vestry book.

There is no evidence of the replacement of the first Lower Church of Kingston Parish, assumed to have been the building mentioned in the vestry record of 1715 as the "Eastermost River Church." It nevertheless seems probable, since its name implies a location in the oldest section of the parish, that this first Lower Church was built soon after Kingston's establishment, and that, like early churches in the other Gloucester parishes, it was replaced after half a century of service, perhaps between 1715 and the opening of the later vestry book in 1740. Support for this reasoning is found in the fact that, in spite of its designation as the Old Church (to distinguish it from the newer Upper Church), the Lower Church was still new enough, in 1740, to be considered worthy of renovation and enlargement. This is shown by a vestry order of the 6th April, 1741, referring to the Old Church as "now in repareing" and showing that it was improved at that time by the building of a pew at each side of the communion table. The vestry book also records that the Eastermost Church was enlarged in 1744 by the addition of a brick wing twenty-five feet square, "with a gallery and Three windows and a dore at the Eand," which shows it to have been a brick building. The Old Church, which was apparently the one thus enlarged, was further improved in 1754 by the erection of another gallery, probably in the west end of the nave.

The above vestry order of 6th April, 1741, makes it clear that the New Church, "now in building" at the opening of the later vestry book in 1740, was also a brick structure, since the contractors, William Rand and John More, were required to tear down a brick wall erected for it and to build it up again "workmanlike," so as to finish the whole building by the last day of July, 1741. It seems unlikely that this new brick Upper Church of 1741 replaced an earlier building on the same site, since in such a case, this earlier Upper Church, rather than the Lower Church, would have been called the Old Church in the vestry record. The existence of earlier Upper and Lower Churches than those mentioned in the vestry book, however probable, is nevertheless purely conjectural, and they have, therefore, not been indicated on the map in Plate 51.

In the light of a vestry order of 22nd November, 1756, that "the Church wardens Do Endeavour to procure a Deed for Land Sufficient for a Church yard at Each Church from the Proprietors of Land adjoining the Churches", it is significant that ample churchyards

surrounding the ancient sites of both the Upper and Lower Churches are still parish property. This entry seems to indicate that both of these buildings, like several other colonial churches, were built on land not deeded to the parish until many years later, but the order may refer to enlargement of the original sites for burial purposes.

Further improvement of the church properties is recorded in an earlier vestry order of 22nd October, 1753, "For the Church wardens to pay for two Vestry Houses 12 x 16 Fram'd & plaistered and floored a Chimney & one window with eight lights", and later entries locate one of these little vestry houses at each of the two churches.

Bishop Meade quotes the Reverend G. S. Carraway, then rector of Kingston Parish, as stating in 1857 that "there were once four places of worship in the parish, over two of which the plough and the harrow have passed. On the sites of the other two, churches have recently been erected."⁶⁰ The Bishop relates that one of these new churches (Christ Church) was built through the efforts of Miss Elizabeth Tompkins (of nearby Poplar Grove plantation), and the other under Mr. Carraway's leadership.

A report made by Bishop Moore in 1816, to the annual convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, evidently refers to the two colonial churches of Kingston Parish, on whose sites modern churches had been erected, according to Bishop Meade. This report states that "one of the old churches [in Kingston Parish] has recently been demolished, and the other is falling into decay. A subscription has been started for the repair of the church that is in ruinous condition".⁶¹

Since the colonial Lower Church is known to have been the one that was repaired, it can safely be said that the old church demolished in 1816 was the Upper Church, which has already been identified as the colonial predecessor of the present Trinity Church. The date of its replacement by a modern church, erected under Mr. Carraway's leadership, is given by the historian, William S. Forrest, who quotes a letter dated June, 1852, from a friend in Mathews County, which undoubtedly refers to it.

This letter gives the following "account of the dedication of a new church in Mathews": "The church is a neat and unpretentious building, located in a beautiful forest. . . . It was erected under the . . . ministration of the Rev. Mr. Carraway, who is doing much good here".⁶² The consecration of the new building, under the name of

⁶⁰ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 326.

⁶¹ Hawks, *Convention Journals of Diocese of Virginia*, 107.

⁶² Forrest, *Historical Sketches of Norfolk*, 481.

Trinity Church, was reported by Bishop Johns to the Diocesan Convention of 1853, as having been performed by him in the month mentioned in the letter.

The church thus described was clearly the immediate predecessor of the present Trinity Church, which replaced this church of 1852, on the same site, some thirty years ago.

During the digging of graves in the highest section of the present Trinity churchyard, traces have recently been discovered of the foundation of a colonial church and its enclosing churchyard wall. These foundations lie just northwest of the existing church and appear to represent the remains of the colonial Upper Church of Kingston Parish. There is some evidence of another foundation in the field adjoining the churchyard on the northeast, but it seems probable that the remains there are those of the former rectory, traditionally located near the church.

Our conclusion, that the colonial Lower Church was the old church whose repair resulted from the subscription of 1816, is based on the early history of the present Christ Church, as given by the late Mr. Milton Murray, who was one of the older members of its congregation and a former vestryman.

According to Mr. Murray, the present Christ Church's colonial predecessor occupied the same site and was built in the form of a cross. The older church was burned at an unknown date, some years after it had been restored to service, but only the ruins of the nave or stem of the cross were rebuilt, about 1840, by Miss Tompkins of Poplar Grove.

The rebuilt colonial church was consecrated, under the name of Christ Church, on 25th April, 1842, by Bishop Johns, according to his report to the Diocesan Convention of the following year. Some time later, the church was again damaged by fire and completely reconstructed, only a few of the colonial bricks being used in the present upper walls.

It seems likely that the tradition that the colonial Lower Church "was built in the form of a cross" refers to its shape as first rebuilt, soon after 1816. There is no record of a colonial church having been first enlarged to a T shape by a long south wing, as in this case, and later to a cross shape by addition of a shorter second wing at the opposite side of the original building, during the colonial period.

It is therefore probable that the colonial Lower Church first became cross-shaped at its first rebuilding, about 1816, through the

construction of a north wing to form a recessed chancel. Since the chancel of a colonial church was always in the east end of the building, such an alteration would never have been made in colonial times, for it would have resulted in a structure whose major axis lay north and south instead of east and west, as in other cruciform colonial churches.

It is significant, as evidence that the present building was built on the colonial church's site and possibly on the original footings of a part of it, that Christ Church is set exactly north and south and that its outside width agrees with that of the wing added in 1744 to the Eastermost Church, believed to have been the Lower Church of the parish.

The wing in question was twenty-five feet square, inside, or twenty-eight feet six inches wide, outside, allowing for the usual thickness of colonial church walls, and this is the exact width of the present Christ Church. The southern end of this wing would have been located twenty-five feet, outside to outside, from the south wall of the original church, which was, of course, set due east and west. The use of a sounding rod, at the indicated distance from the south end of the existing church, which is forty feet long, reveals brick rubble and occasional solid brick, running out from each side of the present building for twenty feet and then extending northward. These indications can be further traced around the outline of a cross-shaped building, the three arms of the cross, forming transept and chancel, being each twenty feet long and the same width as the present church, whose southern end would form the stem of the cross.

So much brick rubble is present on the former site of any colonial structure that such findings are inconclusive unless checked by actual excavation, but the dimensions suggested by them are appropriate for the original church. This building, represented by the east-and-west transept, would thus have been about sixty-five by twenty-five feet, inside the walls, originally, and became T-shaped, through the construction of the wing on the south side. The south wing, being the last addition recorded, would naturally survive the longest and therefore be the part rebuilt about 1840.

It is not known where the first Lower Church stood, but there are indications of other foundations on the present site, and it seems probable that it occupied almost the same spot as the later church.

One of the two Kingston churches, whose sites were said by Mr. Carraway to have gone back under cultivation, was the old North

River Chapel. Bishop Meade alludes to the other one in the following words: "Tradition says that one of the old churches was a private chapel of Hesse, the residence of the Armisteads".⁶³

This ancient chapel is mentioned in a patent for 350 acres, granted to Colonel John Armistead and John Gwynn under date of 30th October, 1686, which land was bounded by "a small pine, on the eastward side of a branch near a chapel".⁶⁴ It is also mentioned in a further grant to Armistead, in the same year, for 130 acres "on the eastward side of a branch near the chapel, adjoining his own land whereon he now lives".⁶⁵

It has been determined from these and other patents that the chapel stood just south of the head of Queen's Creek in the present Mathews County, on a rise of ground still known as Chapel Hill, in commemoration of the old building, and overlooking the south fork of Queen's Creek, once called the Chapel Branch.

It is probable that this was a chapel of ease of Kingston Parish and not a private chapel, although it stood near Colonel Armistead's land, in the neighborhood of the earlier family homestead. The site lies two or three miles southwest of Hesse mansion house, with which this chapel could hardly have had any connection.

It seems likely that this chapel was the one mentioned in an entry in the Kingston vestry book, dated 29th October, 1741, and recording the vestry's agreement with William Rand that he was "to Repare all the Body of the old Chapel and to make New window frames and sashes and to fill the said windows with good Crown glass".

The word "body", in this sense, means the nave or central portion of the church, and the reference could be interpreted equally well as applying to the old North River Chapel, since no other record of the survival of either building into the eighteenth century has been found, as yet.

It nevertheless seems possible that the old chapel on Queen's Creek did survive until after the Revolutionary War and was the building used by the Methodists, as early as 1797, under the name of Mathews Chapel.⁶⁶ This congregation built a new church in 1835, on a site much nearer Hesse, several miles further north in the same county, and the older building was abandoned to final decay and ruin. Only

⁶³ Meade, *Old Families and Churches of Virginia*, I, 326.

⁶⁴ *Patent Book VII*, 532.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 533.

a few sunken graves, without tombstones, remain to mark the spot where once the colonial chapel stood on Chapel Hill.

The present Mathews Chapel is the third Methodist church on the same site, the preceding building having been moved across the road, to serve as a Masonic hall. A branch of Chapel Creek passes behind the church, for which this stream was named.

⁴⁶ Bennett, *Memorials of Methodism*, 365.



PLATE 59

Christ Church, Middlesex.

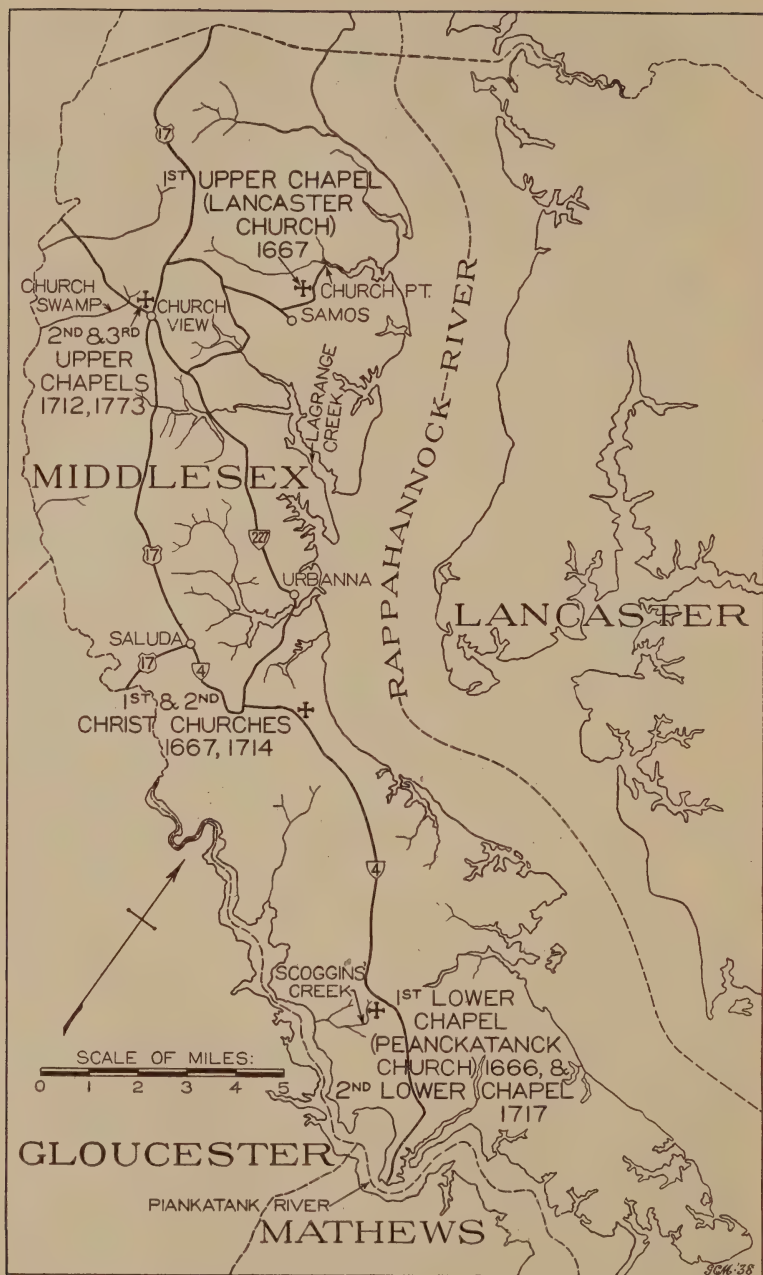


PLATE 60

Map of Middlesex County.

CHAPTER XII.

Middlesex County Churches

THE ORIGIN OF THE colonial Virginia parish and that of its related county organization were so intimately connected that they can seldom be treated separately. In tracing the history of the colonial churches of Christ Church Parish in Middlesex County, Virginia, it is therefore necessary to begin with the formation of Lancaster County out of Northumberland and York Counties in 1651.¹ This original Lancaster County covered both shores of the Rappahannock River, from its mouth upward, and extended indefinitely westward. The whole county was included in one parish, which may also have been called Lancaster,² but its name is not recorded.

In 1654, Lancaster County was divided, by county court order of the 7th August, into an upper and a lower parish, each including territory on both sides of the Rappahannock River.³ The upper parish, in 1656, was made a separate county under the name of Rappahannock.⁴ This left Lancaster County coterminous with the unnamed lower parish, which included the same area as the present Middlesex and Lancaster Counties. On the 1st April, 1657, Lancaster County was, for the second time, divided by court order into two parishes, separated by the river,⁵ and on the 27th May of the same year, the south side parish was subdivided into two parishes, the upper named Lancaster⁶ and the lower recorded later as Peanckatanck.⁷ In 1666, Lancaster and Peanckatanck were reunited to form Christ Church Parish,⁸ and when Middlesex County was cut off from Lancaster County in 1669,⁹ the new county and parish became coterminous and have remained so to this day.

The early history of too many colonial parishes is shrouded in obscurity, due to the loss of the early parish records, but this is not true of our subject parish, whose ancient vestry book has been preserved and

¹ Robinson, *Virginia Counties*, 57.

² *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVI, 522.

³ *Lancaster County Records*, I, 152.

⁴ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 427.

⁵ *Lancaster County Orders*, III, 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, III, 20.

⁷ *Ibid.*, III, 35.

⁸ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, II, 252.

⁹ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XLII, 31.

published.¹⁰ Beginning in 1663 as the first vestry book of the new Lancaster Parish formed in 1657, this volume soon became the first vestry book of Christ Church Parish, whose creation it records in 1666. Furthermore, it continued in use until 1767, near the close of the colonial era, thus covering more than a century of parish history, although the original records were transcribed into a new book in 1701.

An interesting light on this transcription of the original vestry book is thrown by its editor, Dr. Churchill G. Chamberlayne, in another of his publications.¹¹ He notes that, out of some thirty colonial Virginia parish records still extant, this Christ Church vestry book is the only one that antedates Bacon's Rebellion of 1676, although several other vestry records begin in the year following it. This suggests to him the probability that, in the parishes directly affected by the insurrection, it was found advisable, after its close, to destroy or render illegible the existing vestry records, as treasonably incriminating. In support of this theory, he points out that, in the Christ Church vestry book, there is a transcriber's note, inserted in the copied record for 1677, to the effect that, up to this point, some of the vestry minutes in the old book were defaced or wanting, but thereafter all were perfect.

The first parish church for this new Lancaster Parish was ordered soon after its formation, at a meeting of "the major part of the inhabitants" of the parish, held at Henry Corbin's house on the 17th November, 1657. At this meeting it was agreed with the Rev. Samuel Cole that he should serve as rector of both Lancaster and Peanckatanck Parishes and that a church should "be built with all convenient speed on Mr. Boswell's Point."¹² A vestry was elected and its members agreed to build a parsonage and settle a glebe for Mr. Cole. The fact that no similar agreement is recorded, at this date, with the Peanckatanck vestry, suggests that Mr. Cole had originally been minister of the parish on the south side of the river and already had a church in its lower part, which had become Peanckatanck Parish.

Early land grants show that "Mr. Boswell's Point" projected into the Rappahannock River just south of Sunderland Creek, sometimes called Boswell's Creek. North of this point lay the plantation of Henry Corbin, originally patented by Rowland Burnham, so that the stream was also formerly known as Burnham's Creek. No stream by any of these names can now be found in Middlesex County, but boundary

¹⁰ Chamberlayne, *Vestry Book of Christ Church Parish, Middlesex County*.

¹¹ Chamberlayne, *Vestry Book of Petsworth Parish, VIII*

¹² *Lancaster County Records, 1654-1702, II, 141.*

references to Sunderland Creek in the later land grants¹³ identify it as the present Lagrange Creek.

It is apparent that the erection of this first Lancaster Church was held up for several years by rivalry between the vestrymen living in the upper and lower parts of the new parish, each faction seeking to obtain the location of the church on their own side of Sunderland Creek.

The dispute was finally settled by lot in 1665, and the choice fell on the north side of the stream. The vestry, meeting at the house of Henry Nicholls on the 30th April of that year, ordered that a church be built in the chosen location and provided that Mr. Nicholls' house be leased for one year by the parish "until a church be built and finished", clearly indicating that there had been no previous church in the parish. In consideration of the new church's location on their own side of Sunderland Creek, six wealthy members of the parish agreed to "Each of Them . . . Marke a Cow Calf for the use of the Pish . . . to be disposed of by the Vestry as a Stock for the Pish" after two years.

A further order of 26th September, 1665, directed that the vestry of Peanckatanck be approached in regard to "the Uniteing of both prishes into one," and also levied 17000 pounds of tobacco "for the building of a Church, according to the Modall of the Middle-plantacon Church in all respects." This entry is of especial interest, because it clearly refers to the first church at Middle Plantation, later called Williamsburg, which appears to have been completed about 1660, as the earliest predecessor of historic Bruton Parish Church. Nothing is definitely known as to the type of construction of this first Middle Plantation Church, but in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, it may be assumed to have been a frame building with a brick foundation, like so many of the colonial churches constructed at this early date.

Under date of 29th January, 1665/6, the vestry book records the creation of Christ Church Parish, by action of a general vestry for the south side of Lancaster County, as follows: "We doe accord and Agree that the two p^rishes Formerly called Lancaster and Peanckatanck from henceforth be united as one and called Christ Church p^rish . . . It is agreed That Majo^r Gen^l Robert Smith and Henry Corbin Esq^r be requested to move to the Assembly for Continueing the Union of the Two late Parishes of Pyancktanke and Lancaster."

¹³ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 365, 370, 496.

The act of assembly confirming this order was not passed until 26th October, 1666, nine months later,¹⁴ but the vestry did not wait for its ratification before ordering the construction of a parish church, as the wording of the original order reveals: "That a Mother Church be built in the small Indian Field next the head of Capt. Brocas his ground. It being Adjudged by us to be about the Middle of the parish . . . That the Mother Church be forthwith built by the Undertakers" (contractors) "Capt. Cuthbert Potter and John Appleton . . . in every Respect to be done and finished according to the Middle Plantacon Church, to be finished in six months, Glass and iron work convenient time to be given for its transportation out of England." It appears from the above wording that the new Mother Church was intended to be a duplicate of the church specified as a standard of construction, and we may assume that, like the church previously ordered for Lancaster Parish, it was a frame structure with brick foundation walls. Its dimensions, therefore, may have been the same as those of the Middle Plantation Church, although its size is not recorded in the pages of the vestry book.

The first vestry meeting at the new Christ Church was held on the 31st December, 1666, but the building was evidently still incomplete, since Cuthbert Potter was then ordered to "Finish the Mother Church in the most Decent Manner he Shall Think Fitt, and when it is finished Some of this Vestry be appointed to vew the Middle plantation Church and this, and for w^t Charge the Said Potter hath been at more than he was Obliged too in Compleatly finishing the Said Work, to be Considered by this Vestry and Sattisfaction made him for the Same."

Some local pride seems to be exhibited in this vestry order, with its assumption that the church taken as a model was bound to prove inferior to the product of Middlesex builders, and this feeling is still more plainly shown in a subsequent order, dated 20th November, 1667, "that M^r Henry Thacker and M^r Nicholas Cock Doe View the Middle Plantacon Church and make Report to this Vestry how much it is Short of this Church In workmanship and that allowance be made the Undertaker Accordingly." This confidence in the builder's handiwork did not prove entirely justified, however, since the Mother Church had to be shingled in 1673, after only seven years' service, "new shingled" in 1677, and completely re-roofed in 1683, the sheathing being ordered to be ripped off and replaced, and the church to be "plastered where wanting."

¹⁴ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, II, 252.

The same general vestry by whose action Christ Church Parish had been created on the 29th January, 1665/6, also arranged its organization, and the original vestry order of this date provided not only for the construction of a parish church, but also for the maintenance of existing church buildings in the two component parishes. This was done by ordering "That the late p^rish of Pyancketancke doe this yeare Levey to the late Reputed Bounds for the repaire of their Church" and "That the late p^rish of Lancaster Doe Levey to the late reputed bounds for the building of their Chapel of Ease." The first building mentioned was apparently the existing parish church of Peanckatanck, and the second was the new parish church ordered by the Lancaster vestry in 1665 and evidently already under construction. Later entries in the old vestry book make it clear that both of these church buildings were continued in service by the new parish as chapels of ease, or local houses of worship for the convenience of outlying settlers remote from the parish church.

This ancient Peanckatanck Parish Church appears to have been the earliest church building in the combined parish of Christ Church, Middlesex, and being located in the lower part of the county, it naturally became the chapel of ease for the lower precincts of the new parish. The first mention of this church as the Lower Chapel seems to have been in a vestry order of 30th January, 1666/7, when a lay reader was appointed for it, under that title, and during the next quarter century of the vestry record, the names "Lower Chapel" and "Peanckatanck Church" were used interchangeably in referring to the old building.

Old Peanckatanck Church occupied the same site that was used for a later Lower Chapel, still standing, so that we know that it was located at the head of Scoggins' Creek, on the main road down the county, and about six miles below the Mother Church. From the fact of its having needed repairs in 1666, it seems possible that Peanckatanck Church was old enough to have been the first parish church of the lower parish on both sides of the Rappahannock River, formed by the division of the original Lancaster County into two parishes in 1654.

A reference to a glebe in this vicinity, in a land patent dated 20th July, 1642, appears to support the possibility that this old building antedated Peanckatanck Parish's formation, as a church of the original Lower Parish. This patent is to "John Matrum, Gent., for one thousand acres, called Matrum's Mount, in Peanketanke River . . . beginning at Matrum's Creek, including a small island in a great bay

on the north side of Pyanketanke".¹⁵ Later patents of 1651, to Captain George Read and John Senior, prove that this glebe land lay east of Matrum's land in what was then Lancaster County and is now Middlesex.¹⁶

It should be noted here that the name Peanckatanck occurs in the vestry book only twenty-nine times, yet we find it spelled in thirteen different ways. Six of these entries refer to the parish, with four different spellings; four to the church, with three more spellings; and the others designate the river (for which the parish was named), employing six new spellings not found elsewhere in the book. The form adopted for this chapter is the contemporary spelling used earliest and most often in the vestry record, with reference to the parish.

Since Lancaster was the upper of the two parishes combined to form Christ Church Parish in 1666, its unfinished parish church became the chapel of ease for the upper precincts of the enlarged parish. This new Upper Chapel was evidently still under construction at the end of the above year, when the vestry released Marmaduke Hornsbee, contractor for the chapel, and ordered a new "undertaker," Abraham Weekes, to finish it "at the charge of the whole parish," the original levy having been laid for the bounds of Lancaster Parish only.

This building must have been closely similar in design, if not in size, to the new Mother Church, since both were specified to be like the Middle Plantation Church of 1660. It is possibly significant, however, that the Upper Chapel was only required to be built "according to the Modall" of the Middle Plantation Church, and may have been of like design, but smaller dimensions.

There is no record of the new chapel's acceptance by the vestry, but it must have been in service in 1667, since a reader for the Upper Chapel was appointed annually, beginning in that year. As an indication of its probable small size, this chapel had evidently been outgrown by October, 1687, when the vestry ordered "20 foot in length to be added to the West End Thereof," and the addition was completed and paid for in 1690.

The vestry book states that the new Lancaster Parish Church, which became this first Upper Chapel of Christ Church Parish, was built on the north side of Sunderland (Lagrange) Creek, on the land of Henry Corbin and with his "approbation." It is recorded elsewhere¹⁷

¹⁵ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 132.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹⁷ *Christ Church Parish Register*, 33.

that, in 1669, a private pew in the chancel of the Upper Chapel and a private stable adjoining the building were built for the use of Mr. Corbin, and furthermore, that some of the communion silver for this chapel bore his name and coat of arms. There is also a record,¹⁸ dated 6th December, 1666, that a ship built in Virginia for Henry Corbin's brother Gawin, a London merchant, sailed for England in that year, to bring back "commodities and necessities for building and beautifying a church" in Virginia. It seems fair to assume that this shipment included the necessary "Glass and iron work" for the first Mother Church, specified to be transported "out of England," but it appears equally probable that it contained similar material for the first Upper Chapel.

The above facts are given increased significance by Bishop Meade's quotation¹⁹ from a letter written by the Reverend G. S. Carraway, rector of Christ Church Parish about 1845. This letter states that "there are some slight traces of the foundation of a building, now overgrown with pine trees, which tradition says was the chapel of the Buckingham farm, the residence of Mr. Henry Corbin." In view of Henry Corbin's almost proprietary interest in the parish chapel of ease built on his land (this same Buckingham farm), this tradition leads irresistibly to the conclusion that the foundation described by Mr. Carraway was actually that of ancient Lancaster Church, the long-vanished first Upper Chapel of Christ Church Parish.

The most probable location for this chapel foundation is near the old Corbin family graveyard, which lies in the pine woods back of the site of Buckingham House, three fourths of a mile from the present settlement of Samos, and two miles north of ancient Sunderland Creek. Its fine white marble tombstones have been broken up by vandals seeking imaginary treasure, and the brick wall, which once surrounded it, has almost disappeared. Adjoining it are ridges and depressions in the ground surface, which may mark the chapel site, but the sounding rod reveals no evidence of its foundation. It is significant, however, that this Corbin graveyard, about thirty by thirty-five feet in size, lies at the west end of a larger enclosure, of apparently half an acre, marked by a boundary ditch, such as was used to enclose property in colonial times. Both the graveyard and the larger enclosure are laid off due east and west, as they would have been if they had marked the site of a colonial church, and the adjoining point of land on Perrott's Creek, half a mile away, is still known as Church Point. The latter fact carries

¹⁸ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XXIX, 243.

¹⁹ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 372.

great weight as evidence of the former existence of a church in this locality, since in other such cases, this name generally indicates the site of a colonial church or the usual landing place for those attending it.

After forty years of service, this first Upper Chapel fell into disrepair, and on the 24th July, 1707, the vestry ordered its replacement by a new church, which was to be T-shaped, fifty-six by forty-eight feet overall, with the nave and transept both to be thirty-two feet wide. A new location was chosen near Piper's Spring, on Mr. Richard Kemp's plantation, but no appropriation was made for its construction, and the order was ineffective.

In the meantime, the other two churches, of equal or greater age, also became unserviceable, and on the 4th January, 1710, the vestry "Ordered that Three Churches be built in the p'ish of Christ Church." The Upper Chapel was evidently in the worst state of repair, and the vestry initiated their building program, on the above date, by ordering further "that a new Church be built, as soon as conveniently may be, in the upper Precincts, instead of the Chappell, now gone to ruine: and that it be placed near Mr. Marvell Moselyes Plantation, on the Main Roade. Ordered that the above Church be Sixty foot long and five and twenty foot wide." A two-acre lot was purchased from Mr. Moseley, a month later, as a site for this chapel.

A supplementary order of 23rd January, 1710, calls for the framing of this new wooden Upper Chapel to be all of sawn white oak, with sills at least a foot square and quartered, but this was later changed to "ring" or heart lumber, due to the difficulty of obtaining quartered stock of such size, even at this early date, when virgin timber was still available. The order further specifies: "That there be seven windows, three of each side of Eight foot long and four foot wide. End Window to be from the arch within Six foot of the Sill, Ten foot wide . . . Two doors one at the West End . . . [and a] Doore in the Chancell . . . That there be a comendable Screene to divide the Church from the Chancell . . . That the said Church be hipped above the wind beams . . . [and] stand upon Stone Pillars one under each Post and two at each end . . . Steps of Mulberry Blocks." The requirement as to the hiping of the church refers, of course, to its roof, which was to have "clipped gables," cut off halfway to the ridge and hipped above that point.

No date is recorded for the acceptance of this second Upper Chapel, but, like its predecessor, the first Middlesex church of that name, it was later enlarged. In its final form, the second Upper Chapel was al-

most certainly T-shaped, as evidenced by a vestry-book entry dated 9th October, 1733: "Ordered that an addition of Forty foot in length and Twenty-five foot in breadth be added to the upper chapple as soon as conveniently may be and that the Said Building be made of Wood."

This new frame chapel could hardly have been finished when the vestry undertook the second and most important step toward their announced objective by ordering the replacement of the Great Church or Mother Church of the parish. This order is dated 7th April, 1712, and provides "That a New Church be built as Soone as conveniently may be in the Middle Precincts in the same place where the old one now stands."

It contains a detailed specification for the new church, closely following the specification given for the second Upper Chapel in 1710, except that the new Mother Church was required to be of brick, sixty feet by thirty feet in the clear. Its walls were to be fourteen feet high (later increased by five courses of brick), 3 bricks thick to the water table, $2\frac{1}{2}$ bricks thick above, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ in the gables; the foundation was to be two feet in the ground, and three feet high above it. No change was made in the number, size and location of the windows and doors. The church was to have a half-hipped or clipped-gable roof, similar to that of the chapel, and an arched ceiling. Box pews, four feet six inches high, of poplar plank, and a communion table of black walnut or white oak, were specified for the interior of the building, and, as in the chapel, there was to be a screen between the chancel and the nave. Four of the pews were to be raised above the others; the chancel was to be raised one step (of six inches) above the rest of the church floor, and the communion table two such steps above the chancel.

The new Mother Church which was built in accordance with the above specifications is the existing Christ Church, Middlesex, which still stands by the old county road, on the site of its predecessor, the first Christ Church of 1667, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles due east of Saluda and the same distance southeast of Urbanna. It has walls of glazed-header brick, in Flemish bond pattern, and circular-headed doors and windows, although the original rubbed brick arches have been replaced in modern times, and the chancel doorway converted to a window.

The vestry book shows that the carpentry and mason work on the Mother Church were done by different "undertakers," John Hipkins and Alexander Graves, the former's contract also including the plumb-

ing and glazing work. It is probable that "plumbing" was here used in its original connotation, that of "leaden work," such as gutters and downspouts for the roof, and there are indications in the record that the window glasses were secured with lead rather than putty, even though wooden sash windows are clearly specified. The vestry ordered that the church be finished by the 10th June, 1714, and this date, 1714, is inscribed on three bricks, one of them bearing John Hipkins' initials, found in the walls at the church's last reconstruction, and now inset over the front porch doorway. This indicates that the walls, at least, were completed in 1714, and the vestry book shows that the pews and pulpit may have been installed by the end of that year.

As the final step in the church building program adopted in 1710, the vestry of Christ Church Parish, at a meeting held the 7th June, 1714, ordered "That a New Church be built as Soone as conveniently may be in the Lower Precincts on the North Side of the old Church . . . That the above Church be fifty foot Long in the cleare and five and twenty foot wide in the cleare," and "that the Roofe of the sd. Church be hipped above the wind beams."

The vestry's decision to build so small a church must have met with some opposition, for, at a meeting of the 11th November, 1714, they agreed that the dimensions chosen were too short by ten feet, and ordered the chapel to be built sixty feet long, but of the same width.

A little later, on the 6th December, 1714, the size of the new chapel was again changed, by the following order: "This Vestry taking into Consideration the Dimensions of the Lower Chappel mentioned in former Orders of Vestry not being Uniforme It is therefore Ordered that the said Chappell be built two and fifty foot long in the cleare and Thirty foot wide in the cleare."

The same order required "That the s^d Chappell be built in the same place where the Old one now stands," thus definitely ending the existence of old Peanckatanck Church. In view of the Vestry's difficulty in deciding upon the best proportions for the Lower Chapel, it is interesting to note that the walls of the existing church agree exactly with the figures finally adopted.

In the above order we find complete specifications for the chapel, which, aside from the size of the building, are practically identical with those for the new Mother Church, except that the brick walls of the chapel were to be seventeen feet high. There are also some added details regarding the pews and pulpit, which were not fully described in the original specifications. It is evident that these additional require-

ments were written to suit the Mother Church, then nearing completion, as the vestry order directs John Hipkins, contractor for the Mother Church, to follow them in building its pews and pulpit. In confirmation of this supposition, we find that these particulars had to be amended by the vestry on the 3rd January, 1714/15, in order to make them fit the smaller size and different arrangement of the new chapel.

These added requirements, as written for the Mother Church, call for "Two Double pews, below the Screene, one of each side Ten foot wide, the rest to be single Pews, Three and one half foot wide each . . . Pulpitt and Two desks to stand in ally (aisle) . . . between the two double Pews. Two single pews Three and one half foot wide one of each side of Communion Table . . . Rails of Communion Table Sixteen foot long and Ten foot wide. Chancel from East end to screen Sixteen foot."

As later revised to fit the new Lower Chapel, the two double pews were made seven feet wide and the two single pews in the chancel became five feet wide. The communion rail was made fourteen by eight feet, and the chancel itself only twelve feet to the screen. Further revisions, in the above order of 3rd January, 1714/15, provided that "the South doore be made in the body of the Chappell below the Screene" and that "the Pulpitt & two Desks Stand on the North Side opposite to the South doore." If we take these later revisions for the details of the chapel and the unaltered specifications as applying to the church, it becomes possible to draw up a definite interior arrangement of each of these existing buildings as originally built, and these are given in Plates 61 and 63.

The new Lower Chapel was ordered to be built by Captain Henry Armistead and Major Edmond Berkeley, and was required to be finished by the 3rd January, 1716/17. The vestry book states that on the 5th August, 1717, the builders were reported to be putting up pews inconveniently and were ordered to install them as specified, showing the chapel to be practically complete at that date. The first service in the new building, with preaching by the Rev. Bartholomew Yates, then rector of the parish, was held on 25th October, 1717.

The chapel has brickwork laid in the ancient English bond throughout, being one of only four surviving colonial churches in Virginia with this type of masonry; the oldest of the four is the ruined Jamestown Church tower, and the others, Yeocomico and St. Peter's Churches, are both contemporary with the chapel. In keeping with the Lower Chapel's character as a simple chapel of ease, the door and window

trim is of the plainest kind, using ordinary relieving arches, and there are no glazed headers. The bricks are unusually large, about 10 by $4\frac{3}{4}$ by $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in size, producing an exceptionally heavy wall, nearly 27 inches thick. The date 1715, divided in the middle by the initial "A," possibly that of Armistead the builder, is cut in a brick at the left of the west door, about seven feet above the ground, indicating the date of completion of the walls, to that height at least.

In order to complete the story of the Upper, Middle, and Lower Churches ordered in 1710, as revealed by the vestry record, it should be mentioned that the Mother Church was improved in 1719 by the addition of "A convenient Cupilo at the West End," built to house a bell presented to the new parish church in 1718 by the Bishop of London. In the latter year, the vestry book also records a bequest of £125 made by Madam Elizabeth Churchill, to buy ornaments for the new Mother Church. It was spent on an altar piece, presumably inscribed with the Ten Commandments, which had to be divided and one half placed on each side of the large chancel window. Further improvements are covered by an appropriation "to lay the Iles of the three Churches with Stone" in 1731, and an agreement by the vestry, dated 15th November, 1733, to build churchyard walls of brick, four feet six inches high, eighteen inches thick to the water table and fourteen inches above, around the Mother Church and the two chapels. On the latter date, the vestry authorized an addition twenty feet square to both the Middle Church and the Lower Chapel, to be built at private expense for the exclusive use of the Wormeley, Berkeley, Churchill and Grymes families, but there is no indication in the brickwork of either building that such an addition was ever made. A gallery was built in the west end of the Lower Chapel about the year 1750. The final modification of the Mother Church in colonial times was made in 1762, when all the single pews were made into double ones.

The specifications recorded for all three of the churches ordered for Christ Church Parish in 1710 contain several architectural features of especial interest. The first of these features, apparently typical of early eighteenth-century church construction, is the large end window in the chancel, specified to be six feet high, from the window sill to the spring of the arched top, and ten feet wide. This was about as wide as the similar window originally fitted in the chancel of old St. Peter's Church (1703) in New Kent county, but now bricked up. It also recalls "the good large window, fitt and proportionable for such a church," specified at the east end of another contemporary Virginia

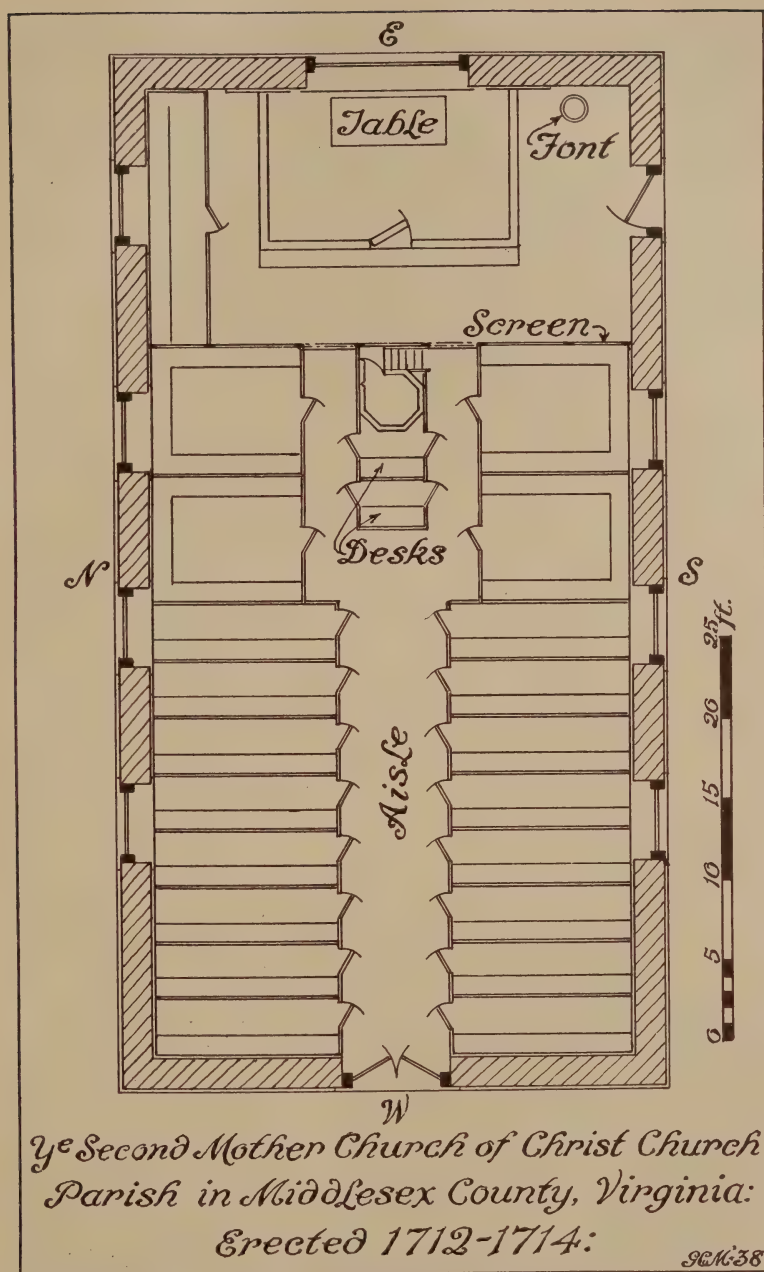


PLATE 61 Christ Church, interior arrangement.



church building, the second Lynnhaven Parish Church of 1692 in Princess Anne.

Another and more unusual feature of these specifications, the roof "hipped above the wind beams," has come down to us in the quaint Dutch roof of the Lower Chapel with its "clipped gables." The only other survival of a colonial Virginia church roof of this type is found on the Old Stone Church of Augusta, a Presbyterian structure of 1749, but records have been found of the use of "clipped gable" roofs on several other colonial church buildings. The "wind beams" mentioned were what are known today as "collar beams," horizontal timbers connecting opposite rafters at about mid-length.

The most interesting architectural detail of these three early churches, also present in the still earlier first Upper Chapel of 1667, is unique in that it is not to be found in any surviving colonial church in Virginia, having passed away without a trace, as a result of the reconstruction and remodelling of the existing Middlesex churches. This is the "commendable screene to divide the Church from the Chancell," specified in the same words for all three churches ordered in 1710.

This screen appears to have been of the type defined in Webster as "a dwarf wall or partition of stone, metal or wood,—solid or pierced and often ornamental,—carried up to a certain height, for separation and protection, as in a church." It was probably the same, essentially, as the choir screen, which Webster defines as "A screen, as of ornamental woodwork, wrought iron, or the like, enclosing the choir; that part of the screen that closes the western end of the choir and separates it from the transept or nave; the rood-screen." Further light on the subject is thrown by Kidder's "Architect's and Builder's Handbook," which says that "in England, (church) screens were of two kinds, one, of open woodwork, generally called rood-screens," and defines rood-screen as "the arrangement to carry the crucifix or rood, and to screen off the rest of the church . . . In European countries, the general construction of wooden screens is close paneling beneath, about three feet to three feet six inches high, on which stands screen work composed of slender turned balusters or regular wooden mullions, supporting tracery more or less rich, with cornices, cresting, etc., and often painted in brilliant colors or gilded."

It seems probable that our Middlesex church screens were of the type last described, paneled to pew height and of close-spaced baluster construction above, supporting the cornices forming the top of the opening for the aisle, with "tracery" (i. e., woodwork pierced in a

decorative pattern) between lower and upper cornices. Support for this view is found in the specifications for a contemporary colonial church in the adjoining county (built at Poplar Spring, Petsworth Parish, Gloucester county, in 1677) which calls for a screen to be run across the church with balusters, with two paneled pews in the chancel joining to the screen with balusters suitable to the screen.²⁰ It is also supported by an item in the specification for the second Lower Chapel of 1717, which requires "That the screene be open pursuant to the directions of the Overseers of the worke".

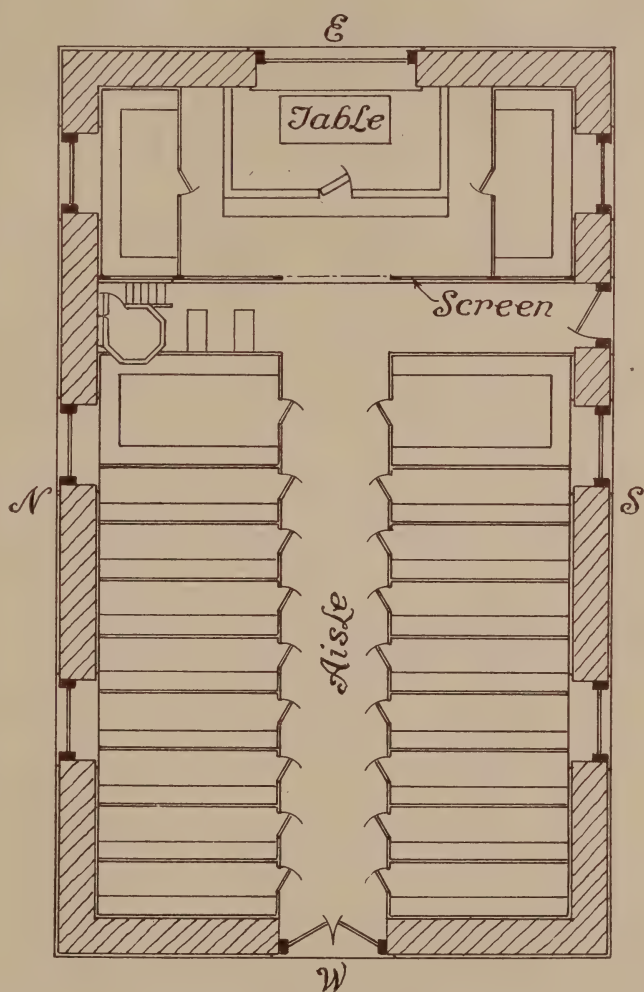
The fact that this unique screen was also present in the earliest first Upper Chapel of 1667 is established by the order for its enlargement in 1690, which also provides for the "Pulpit and the Screan to be removed, and the Comunion Table to be Rayled In". This order did not eliminate the pulpit and screen, but merely relocated them, to enlarge the chancel and make room for the desired communion rail. This suggests that the rood screen was also a feature of the similarly designed Mother Church and that its introduction into Middlesex County followed its use in the Middle Plantation Church of 1660, taken as a model for both the first church and chapel of Christ Church Parish.

The vestry record shows that for each of the three churches ordered in 1710 a price was set in sweet-scented tobacco, the amount being 126,000 pounds for the Mother Church, 110,000 pounds for the Upper Chapel, and 90,000 pounds for the Lower Chapel. At the highest contemporary rate of exchange quoted in the same record, these three churches cost £1060, £925, and £757, respectively, although this rate varied sharply from year to year.

There is no surviving colonial church building in Middlesex county today that can be identified with the second frame Upper Chapel of 1712, and the old Vestry book closes in 1767, without recording any order for its replacement. The Rev. G. MacLaren Brydon, historiographer of the diocese of Virginia, has brought to light definite evidence that it was replaced, however, this evidence consisting of two advertisements in the *Virginia Gazette*.

The first of these advertisements, dated 26th March, 1772, calls for bids on a new church in the upper precincts of Christ Church Parish, Middlesex county, and the other, dated the 14th May, in the same year, states that this church is to be built in the form of a cross, sixty feet long by thirty feet wide, each way, in the clear, with one gallery.

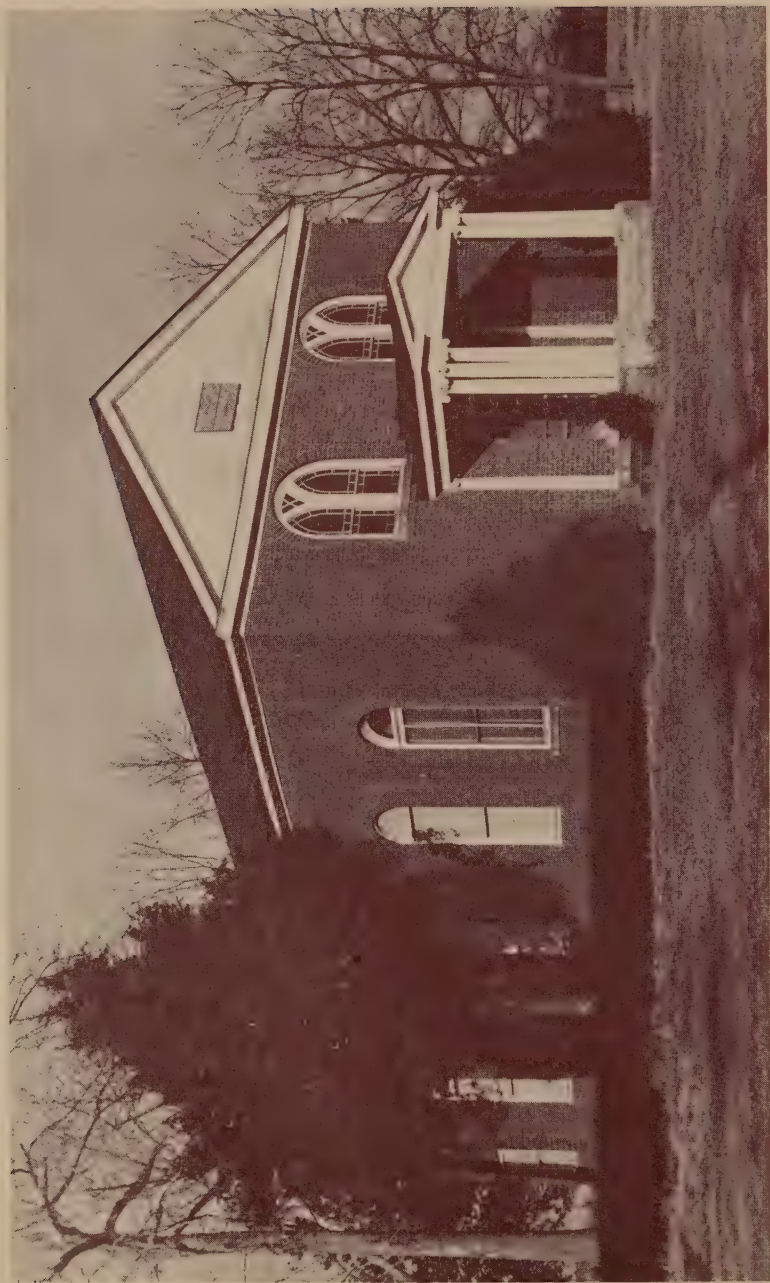
²⁰ Chamberlayne, *Vestry Book of Petsworth Parish*, 3.



*The Second Lower Chapel of Christ Church
Parish in Middlesex County, Virginia:
Erected 1714-1717:*

0 5 10 15 20 25 ft.

SCM'38



Upper Chapel, Middlesex.

Dr. Brydon identifies this new Upper Church, probably finished in 1773, with the existing colonial brick structure known as Hermitage Baptist Church, which stands near the main highway at Church View, some seven miles above Saluda, the county seat, and nine miles north of the old Mother Church of the parish.

Local tradition, as given by Mr. J. S. Richardson, a deacon of Hermitage Baptist Church, relates that the church once had a wing, which was torn down and its materials used to build a tavern, across the road from the church. According to this tradition, the tavern, while under construction, was demolished by a windstorm and never rebuilt. Mr. Richardson recounts that, as a boy, he was shown by his father the brick-filled depression, in a nearby field, that marked the cellar excavation for this tavern, but that it has since been filled in and plowed over.

In the light of Dr. Brydon's evidence as to the probable origin of Hermitage Church, and of the fact that there is no record of the survival of any of the seventeenth-century churches of Middlesex county, another local tradition attributing much greater antiquity to Hermitage Church is clearly untenable. Before accepting the building as the Upper Church of 1773, however, it becomes necessary to account for the fact that Hermitage is a rectangular church, sixty by thirty feet, inside, while the third Upper Church was cross-shaped, although of corresponding dimensions.

The solution of this discrepancy is found in the north-and-south location of the existing church, which marks it as merely the surviving portion of a larger church, since all colonial churches were oriented, and rectangular church buildings invariably were placed east and west. Examination of the present church walls reveals a vertical joint in the brickwork, about fifteen feet from each end, on both sides of the building, and the use of a sounding rod shows the old footings of the original east and west arms of the cross running out from all four joints.

This indicates that the church has been transformed from cruciform to rectangular shape by the demolition of the east and west wings, forming chancel and nave, leaving the north-and-south transept standing alone as the present building. It is significant that this reconstruction is consistent with the local tradition that a former wing was torn down and its bricks used to build a tavern. The rebuilding closely parallels that of St. Mary's White Chapel, a cross-shaped church built in 1740, on the opposite side of the Rappahannock River, and similarly converted to rectangular form at an unknown date. The absence of

brick gables on Hermitage Church indicates that, like St. Mary's, the third Upper Church originally had a hip roof. Old deeds on record at Saluda show that the adjoining property was known as the Church Plantation as far back as 1758, at least, strongly suggesting that the Upper Church of 1773 occupied the same site as its predecessor, the Upper Chapel of 1712. This Church Plantation was last owned, in colonial times, by the Rev. Bartholomew Yates, rector of the parish.

Since the openings left in the walls by removal of the chancel and nave were closed in with brickwork uniform in type and workmanship with that of the original walls, it seems probable that this alteration was made during the first decade of the nineteenth century, before the colonial brickwork, in glazed-header Flemish bond, had gone out of use. This is all the more likely, since it is a matter of record that Christ Church Parish did not even have a minister from 1813 to 1840, and was unrepresented in convention from 1792 to 1835, except by a lone lay delegate in 1821. Local tradition is definite, however, that the church was abandoned, but not in ruins, when taken over by the Baptists in 1845.

The history of the three surviving colonial churches of Christ Church Parish, Middlesex, during the first three quarters of a century following the colonial era, is vividly told by Bishop Meade.²¹ According to his account, written about 1857, the Mother Church was abandoned for half a century and became so ruinous that, upon its reconstruction in 1843, an immense sycamore tree had to be taken out, piecemeal, from within its crumbling walls, and two feet of rich black mold had to be removed, before the flagstones of its aisles could be uncovered.

The old church evidently had stood a roofless ruin for so many years that no one knew or cared enough about the shape of its original half-hipped roof to attempt to restore it. At the time of its reconstruction, the ancient chancel was partitioned off as a vestry room, since removed, and the original large chancel window was much reduced in size. The interior woodwork with its high pulpit, double pews, and interesting "screen," had, of course, vanished utterly, and no effort has been made to restore its original appearance. Old Christ Church was again repaired and further remodelled in 1900, and is still in active use by the Episcopalians as their parish church.

Bishop Meade, quoting the letter received from the Rev. Mr. Carraway,²² alludes briefly to one of the Middlesex churches as about

²¹ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 369.

²² *Ibid.*, I, 372.

to be repaired by the Baptists. This appears to refer to old Hermitage Church, in agreement with its identification as the third Upper Church of 1773. Its present congregation takes great pride in their interesting old church, and it is in excellent condition.

The same informant mentions that the old Lower Church had been taken over by the Methodists, but still retained some appearance of antiquity, in spite of having been remodelled so as to destroy "all evidence of Episcopal taste and usage." As already stated, the lines of the original quaint half-hipped roof are still visible under a modern covering of sheet metal, but the large east window has been converted into a chancel recess, and the screen, together with the high pews and pulpit, has long since disappeared.

Mr. Carraway's letter states, however, that "the roughly-carved chest which formerly held the plate and other articles for the decent celebration of the Holy Communion" still stood before the chancel at that date. This ancient chest stands before the chancel of the Lower Chapel to this day, and is apparently the one mentioned in a vestry levy of the 20th November, 1677, and if so, it is now over two hundred and sixty years old. In this levy, it was ordered "that M^r Richard Perrott J^r be p^d for the Chest at the Lower Chappell," and the price set was three hundred pounds of tobacco. A vestry levy of 1762 allows three shillings and sixpence "to William Churchill, Churchwarden, for a Lock for the Linnen Chest at the Lower Chappell." As Mr. Richard Perrott, Jr., was the builder who made extensive repairs to the Lower Chapel in the year first mentioned, it seems likely that he built the chest. The vestry book shows that a chest was purchased for the Upper Chapel in the same year, and one for the Mother Church in 1706, but both of them together cost less than the Lower Chapel chest, and they have long since disappeared, while the latter has survived as the old church's greatest treasure.

The Lower Chapel chest is built of solid oak, much darkened by age, with poplar side and back panels and poplar bottom, indicating its local origin. It is about five feet long by two feet wide and two feet six inches high, and its oaken front panels, rails and corner posts are completely covered with roughly incised designs of primitive character. A gadroon motive is employed on the upper rail, with incised lunettes on the stiles, interlaced lunettes on the bottom rail, and shallow, flat carving on the panels. The cover is carried by hand-wrought iron strap hinges, and only a fragment is left of the hasp provided for the lock purchased one hundred and seventy-five years ago. A built-in com-

partment at one end may have held the communion vessels belonging to the chapel.

In the opinion of Mr. Joseph Downs, Curator of the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the date 1677 is a plausible one for the Lower Chapel chest, illustrated in Plate 65. He states that, in New England, such chests are typical of colonial workmanship of the second half of the seventeenth century. The lunette motive on the bottom rail, in particular, closely resembles the carving on an oak chest made in Massachusetts, about 1675, and now owned by the Museum. The remaining carving and the chamfering of the members enclosing the panel fields are in the spirit of seventeenth-century work done in America, and generally similar to contemporary New England designs, according to Mr. Downs.

According to Bishop Meade, the Lower Chapel communion silver was preserved by a member of its former Episcopal congregation, who became the wife of a Virginia clergyman of the diocese. Upon her leaving the county, she took with her the old service, to save it from desecration, and lent it to a church in Richmond, on condition that it should be restored to Christ Church Parish at its revival. Application for return of the silver was accordingly made in 1840, but the vestry, having the original Christ Church silver for use in their restored parish church, accepted the value of the Lower Chapel plate in money.²³ The historic Lower Church vessels were purchased in 1846 by the vestry of St. Paul's Church, Richmond, where they are still in occasional use. The inscription on one of them indicates that they were given to the Lower Chapel in 1722, soon after the construction of the existing chapel building.²⁴

The old chapel is still known as the Lower Church, although often referred to as "Old Church," merely. Mr. J. N. Hart, of Hartfield, Virginia, a steward, trustee and treasurer of the present church, states that the floor has had to be replaced twice within the past fifteen years, due to the ravages of termites. At its last replacement, there was found, in the ground beneath it, an ancient tombstone marking a burial in the aisle of old Peanckatanck Church, the original Lower Chapel on the present site. The stone is that of Mrs. Mary Beverley, wife of Major Robert Beverley, and is dated 1678; this slab has now been raised and re-laid flush with the new wooden floor. The colonial type of small-paned windows and balustered gallery rail has been retained, and the interior of the old church is attractive and interesting.

²³ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 372.

²⁴ Weddell, *St. Paul's Church, Richmond, Virginia*, II, 604.



PLATE 65

First Lower Chapel's linen chest.



PLATE 66 *Map of King William and King and Queen Counties.*

CHAPTER XIII.

King and Queen and King William County Churches

THE COUNTIES OF King and Queen and King William have retained more of their colonial church buildings than has any other similar area in Virginia. In these two counties, six of the nine church structures in service at the close of the colonial period are still standing today, although one of the King William churches is a ruin, and only one of the six old buildings remains an Episcopal church. Our knowledge of the early churches of this region is limited, since the archives of both counties have been largely destroyed by fire and almost all their parish records have been lost, with the principal exception of one eighteenth-century vestry book for a parish in King and Queen.

The present King William and King and Queen Counties once formed part of Charles River County, one of the eight original shires into which the Virginia colony was divided in 1634.¹ The original county's name was changed to York in 1643.² Its area north of the York and Mattaponi Rivers became Gloucester County in 1651, and York and Gloucester Counties' indefinite northwestward extension was cut off above Scimino and Poropotank Creeks, in 1654, to form New Kent County.³

The vast territory comprising New Kent County, as it first existed, was subdivided in 1691 by the formation of King and Queen County out of the older county's area between the Pamunkey River and the Dragon Swamp.⁴

The new county of King and Queen was, in turn, divided at the Mattaponi River in 1701 and the section lying between the Pamunkey and Mattaponi became King William County.⁵ The upper parts of King William and King and Queen were cut off to form part of Spotsylvania County in 1720, and were further reduced at the formation of Caroline County in 1728.⁶ The two counties, whose old

¹ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 208.

² *Ibid.*, I, 249.

³ *Ibid.*, I, 388.

⁴ *Ibid.*, III, 94.

⁵ *Ibid.*, III, 211.

⁶ Robinson, *Virginia Counties*, 202.

churches form the subject of this chapter, attained their present limits through enactments of 1742 and 1762, which successively added portions of upper King and Queen to Caroline County.⁷

The formation of parishes in this region generally preceded its subdivision into counties and extended along practically the same lines. The first parish recorded as existing in old New Kent County was Blisland. Although no enactment for its creation has been found, existing land patents show that it was erected in 1653 or earlier. Since the organization of a frontier section of the colony into a parish was regularly followed by its establishment as a separate county, it is most probable that Blisland was coterminous with the original New Kent County, as set up in 1654.

The first reduction in Blisland's area was the loss of its northern portion, in accordance with an order of assembly dated 24th March, 1654/5, "that from Poropotank to Mattapony upward (vizt.) on the north side of Yorke river be a distinct parish by the name of Stratton Major".⁸ The parish thus created evidently had an indefinite extension up the Mattapony River watershed, above New Kent's lower boundary at Poropotank Creek, and was bounded on the south by the Pamunkey River, whose lower section was then considered as the upper end of the York River, and not as a separate stream. It is also apparent from legislative enactments, dealing with later parishes in the original New Kent County, that Stratton Major's southern boundary followed the Pamunkey River only as far up as John's Creek (now Jack's Creek) and coincided with the ridge down the west side of Pamunkey Neck, above that point.

The upper section of Stratton Major Parish was cut off before 1674 as St. Stephen's Parish, and in 1680, the southern part of Stratton Major and St. Stephen's Parishes, between the Mattapony River and the ridge down the west side of Pamunkey Neck, was erected as St. John's Parish.⁹ The territory that remained to Blisland Parish, after the cutting-off of Stratton Major Parish in 1655, was again subdivided in 1678, when its northern half became St. Peter's Parish.

When King and Queen County was created in 1691, the area between the Pamunkey Neck ridge and the Pamunkey River, at that time a part of St. Peter's Parish, was included in St. John's Parish, making it coterminous with Pamunkey Neck, which was then formed

⁷ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, V, 185; VII, 620.

⁸ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 404.

⁹ McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses, 1659-93*, 150.

into the new county of King William in 1701. The upper part of St. John's Parish was cut off as St. Margaret's Parish in 1720, and a similar division of St. Stephen's Parish created Drysdale Parish in 1723.¹⁰

As usual, the formation of a new county followed the division of a parish and, in 1728, Caroline County was formed out of the upper ends of King William, King and Queen, and Essex Counties,¹¹ previously curtailed by the cutting off of Spotsylvania County in 1720. St. Margaret's Parish was evidently extended to include all of Caroline county's area, and in 1744, lost its territory in King William County, through the union of St. Margaret's lower part with the upper part of St. John's to form the new parish of St. David.¹² A part of Drysdale Parish was later included in Caroline County, by the addition to that county of parts of King and Queen in 1742 and 1762.

Because of the almost complete loss of King and Queen County records, definite statements cannot be made in regard to the earliest churches of the parent parish, Stratton Major. Some notes taken by the late Conway Robinson from the General Court and Council minutes for 1664, before their destruction through the burning of Richmond, during the Civil War, show that many pages of these records were devoted to litigation or legislation in that year, "concerning the churches of Stratton Major parish, New Kent."¹³ These records prove that there were at least two churches, built or building, in Stratton Major Parish in that year, although there were not likely to have been more than two, at that early date. It is probable that these two churches, in accordance with colonial custom, were known as the Upper and Lower Churches of the parish.

It appears equally likely that the upper of these churches was cut off from the parent parish with the new parish of St. Stephen, during the decade following the date of the reference quoted above. This conclusion is based upon a petition of 1682, asking that the St. Stephen's vestry be dissolved, and stating that this parish already had a church old enough to have gone to ruin.¹⁴

It is reasonable to assume that the Lower Church of Stratton Major was its first parish church, built in the earliest-settled section

¹⁰ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVIII, 110. Note that the first syllable of Drysdale is pronounced as "driz", not "dries".

¹¹ Robinson, *Virginia Counties*, 202.

¹² Hening, *Statutes at Large*, V, 254.

¹³ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 510.

¹⁴ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XLI, 198.

of the parish, soon after its formation in 1655. Boundary references to a church, in early patents for lands in the lower end of the present King and Queen County, are believed to apply to this building, and they support this assumption as to its date.

The earliest of these patents is dated 5th November, 1669, and was made to John Leviston for 780 acres lying in New Kent County, along Cattail Branch, a tributary of Mattasup Creek, extending to King's Swamp, "and crossing the path that goeth to the church".¹⁵ Patents for the adjoining grants show that this land lay northwest of the head of Poropotank Creek. Further proof of the existence of the Lower Church of 1669 in this locality is given by another of these patents, dated 26th April, 1693, to John Williams of King and Queen, for 410 acres adjoining Leviston, cornering at a "tree near the Church Road".¹⁶ A third patent, of 23rd October, 1703, to Francis Major for 180 acres in Stratton Major Parish, King and Queen County, on the same Mattasup Creek, contains a boundary reference to "the Church Run", which confirms the earlier evidence of the presence of this church in the lower part of the parish.¹⁷

The Lower Church of Stratton Major is believed to have stood about six tenths of a mile west of the present Cologne Post Office (at Buena Vista), the site lying in the woods on the south side of a country road leading off from State Route 14 at the village mentioned. The churchyard lay only an eighth of a mile west of a small stream, which was presumably the "Church Run" of the last-quoted patent, and forms the headwaters of a branch of the present Hockley Creek. The latter is identified as the colonial Mattasup Creek by processioning records in the vestry book, which show this creek to have been the next large stream west of Poropotank Creek. A tombstone of 1723 still marks the church's site.

From the fact that a later Baptist congregation, which appears to have last used the old Lower Church, assumed the name Poroporone Church, it seems probable that this was also the name of the colonial building, but it is not so designated in any record yet discovered. The ruins of this ancient Lower Church have long since vanished, but the back-filled trenches dug for the removal of its foundation show that it was a small brick building, originally measuring only about fifty by twenty feet, inside the 18-inch upper walls. It was later en-

¹⁵ *Patent Book VI*, 263.

¹⁶ *Patent Book VIII*, 248.

¹⁷ *Patent Book IX*, 556.

larged by addition of a north wing twenty-two feet wide, and extending twenty-eight feet from the main building, about three feet off center toward its west end. The eighteenth-century vestry book of the parish shows that this church had a porch, which was probably an open structure of brick at the west entrance.

With the opening, in 1729, of this Stratton Major vestry book, the only colonial parish record for King and Queen County that is known to have survived, our knowledge of the churches of this parish is on a firmer basis. The vestry book reveals that two churches were then in service in the parish, but gives no hint that either of them held precedence over the other by virtue of being regarded as the parish church. These two churches, thus placed on an exactly even footing, were known as the Upper Church and Lower Church, and were used alternately for vestry meetings.

This lack of distinction between the two churches is all the more remarkable because a report of 1724, submitted by the Reverend John Skaife, rector of Stratton Major Parish, in response to a questionnaire sent to the colonial clergy by the Bishop of London, mentions only his parish church.¹⁸ The rector's report does not specify this church's position, relative to the upper or lower end of the parish, nor does it even hint at the existence of another church within its bounds.

There are strong indications, nevertheless, that an upper church building actually existed in the reduced Stratton Major Parish, for many years prior to 1724. The marked difference in the relative importance accorded to the two churches of the parish, in the above records, suggests that an equally marked change in their status took place during the five years' interim between the submittal of the report and the opening of the vestry book. It seems probable, then, that the rector's report dealt only with his ancient, but recently repaired and enlarged, brick parish church, because the other church in the parish was merely a superannuated frame chapel, about to be replaced by a new brick building.

The new house of worship, thus assumed to have been built between 1724 and 1729, is the Upper Church of the vestry book, and it is still in existence. It apparently occupied the exact site of the earlier chapel (traditionally a wooden structure), since no sign of a previous church foundation is evident in the surrounding churchyard. The present church is manifestly an early eighteenth-century building, with the classic pedimented doorways typical of the period assumed for its

¹⁸ Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 276.

erection. The previous occupation of its site by an earlier building therefore seems well established by the presence in its churchyard of seventeenth-century tombstones of the Johnson family, the oldest being that of Mrs. Susan Duncombe Johnson, dated 8th August, 1686.¹⁹

This frame chapel, the second Upper Church of the parish, may have been one of "the churches of Stratton Major parish", mentioned in the lost General Court record of 1664, but it more probably was built, soon after the formation of St. Stephen's Parish, which occurred before 1674, to serve those who had formerly attended the original first Upper Church, cut off with the new parish.

There is no evidence, in the vestry book or elsewhere, of the replacement of the third Upper Church by a later structure on the same site. The colonial house of worship, now used by the Methodists and generally known as "Old Church", which stands on the southwest side of State Route 14, a half mile southeast of Shanghai Post Office and 4½ miles northwest of Shackelford's, therefore appears to be the building indicated in the vestry book as the Upper Church of Stratton Major Parish in 1729 and the years following.

The existing church is one of the finest examples of colonial Flemish-bond brickwork in the state, its warm red surface being embellished with glazed blue headers laid in a pattern of exceptional regularity. The building measures sixty feet four inches by thirty feet, inside the upper walls, whose thickness is two feet, or 2½ brick lengths. There are two windows in each side of the nave, one in each side of the chancel, and two in the east end. As usual, the main entrance is in the west end, and there is a side entrance doorway in the south side near the chancel. A small circular window is cut in each of the gables.

Few details of the old church's original interior arrangement are given in the vestry book, but it was apparently of conventional design, having the pulpit on the north side, directly opposite the south doorway, and a central aisle leading from the chancel to the main entrance in the west end. A cross aisle led from the pulpit to the side doorway, and the chancel occupied the remainder of the east end of the church, with a "great pew" at each side of the communion table. It is recorded that "a convenient gallery" was built in the church in 1739, probably at the west end of the nave. A marble font was given to the Upper Church in 1730 by Colonel Gawin Corbin, and a sundial was installed

¹⁹ Harris, *History of Louisa County*, 379.

in the churchyard sixteen years later. The vestry book also relates that, in 1729, both churches were "railed in" and the Upper Church's roof was tarred.

Both Upper and Lower Churches of Stratton Major were abandoned in 1768, upon completion of a large new parish church in a central location, midway between the two older buildings. The vestry ordered, on 3rd October of this year, "that the Church Wardens do agree with some Workman to Studd and Board up the Windows at the upper Church & secure the Doors". The same order reveals that near the Upper Church stood a vestry house, which had been rented out as a dwelling, since the wardens were also required to evict these tenants and sell the building at the best terms possible, for the benefit of the parish poor. No provision was made for securing the Lower Church, which was apparently considered too old to be worth preserving.

The first record of the vestry's intention to replace both of the existing churches in the parish is found in a vestry order of 30th November, 1759, "that the Church Wardens do give Publick Notice that a New Church is to be built in this Parish, & that a Vestry is appointed to Meet at the Upper Church on the last Wednesday in February next . . . in Order to receive Planns from Undertakers" (i. e., contractors) "& agree for Building of the same". This meeting was held on the 27th February, 1760, as ordered, and Major Harry Gaines undertook to build the new church on the Honorable Richard Corbin's land, at the place called Goliah's Field. The contract price was to be £1300, perhaps the largest sum recorded as paid for construction of a colonial church in Virginia.

The new parish church of Stratton Major *was not only the costliest but also the largest colonial house of worship* of which there is any record in the state. It was specified to be eighty by fifty feet, in the clear, with side walls twenty-seven feet high and four brick lengths, or three feet, in thickness, resting on a massive foundation with footings five brick lengths wide. There was a doorway six feet wide and twelve feet high in each of the north and south sides, and an eight-foot doorway, sixteen feet high, in the west end, as a main entrance.

The windows were on the same grand scale, being five feet wide and thirteen feet high, with arched tops and sixteen panes in each sliding sash. Five of these windows were specified on each side of the church, and two more in the east end. Two smaller windows were provided above the gallery, which extended thirteen feet from the

west end of the church. The building had a gable roof, with a modillion cornice, apparently extended across the face of the gables, as on Abingdon Church in Gloucester County.

A vestry order of 11th December, 1767, allotting seats in the New Church (as it was always called in the vestry book), is in sufficient detail to furnish a basis for drawing up the probable interior arrangement of the building, as shown in Plate 68. This arrangement must have resembled very closely the colonial interior plan of Ware Church in Gloucester County, which is six feet shorter and sixteen feet narrower, inside, than the New Church. The only difference in the arrangement of the two churches was that the larger building's greater length and breadth permitted four pews to be installed on each side of the communion table, instead of only one.

Like Ware Church, the New Church had four rows of high box pews in the body of the church, comprising a single row along the north and south walls and a double row placed end to end down the middle of the building. Two longitudinal aisles extended the full length of the nave, dividing the wall pews from those on the center line. These aisles were connected by two cross aisles, one running between the two side doors and the other across the west end, between the two corner stairways to the gallery.

The pews and chancel had wooden floors raised one step above the aisles, which were six feet wide and paved with white flagstones. Against the east wall of the church stood the communion table, before a black walnut reredos, having the tablets of the Law in the center, and the Lord's Prayer and Creed at the sides. The space around the table was raised two steps above the rest of the chancel and enclosed by a black walnut communion rail. This rail was set back from the side pews far enough to allow a passage to them, and a wider passage extended across the front of the enclosed space. Between the south door and the next window to the west stood the high "wine-glass" pulpit, beneath its sounding board, with lectern and clerk's desk before it, in "three-decker" fashion.

It is noteworthy that the allotment of seats by the vestry committee was made along geographical lines, with the people from the Lower Church on the north side and those from the Upper Church on the south side. If any difference in desirability between the two sides of a colonial church was recognized by its congregation, the north side was considered the more honorable, since the magistrates and vestry



PLATE 67

Upper Church, Stratton Major Parish.

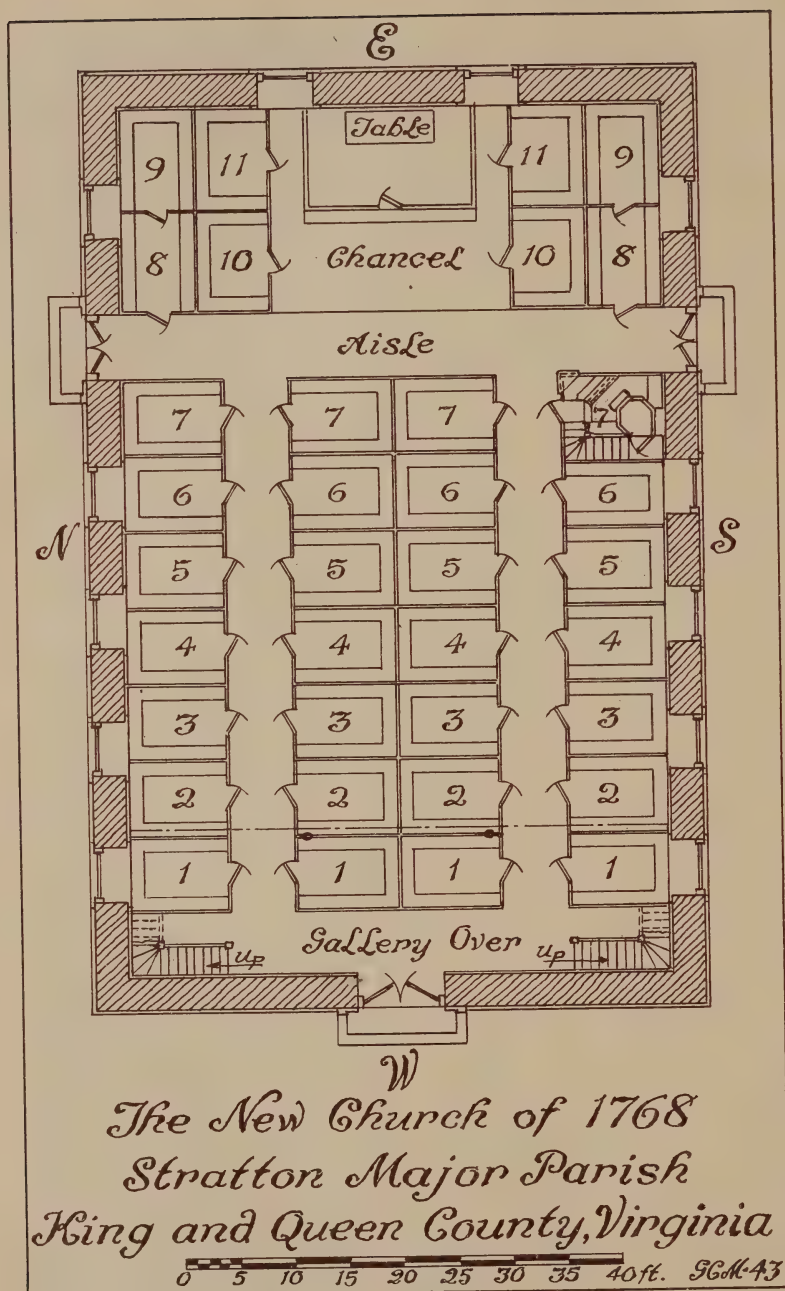


PLATE 68 New Church, Stratton Major Parish, interior arrangement.

were usually seated there and in most older churches, the pulpit and minister's pew were on this side.

Since the men did the seating, they put the women on the south side, and typical colonial seating arrangements of this character are recorded in the vestry books, for Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg and Old Donation Church in Princess Anne County. In the New Church, the geographical division of the parishioners prevented segregation of the men and women on opposite sides of the building, and it was accomplished by seating them on opposite sides of each aisle. Since the middle banks of pews were too close together to allow effective separation of the sexes, the women were seated along the sides of the church and the men down the center.

The choice of sides between the two congregations may have been decided by lot, but the assignment of the north side to the people from the Lower Church probably was due to its former position as the parish church. The Honorable Richard Corbin was not only the donor of the church's site but also a member of council and the Receiver-General of the colony. Since he was the wealthiest and most influential man in the parish, he was assigned the pew nearest to the altar, on the north side of the church, as the place of greatest honor, and the widow of the late Speaker Robinson was given the corresponding pew on the south side. The rector, Commissary William Robinson, was seated next to the pulpit, in accordance with custom, but would have been "geographically" seated on the south side, anyway, since he lived near the Upper Church.

The New Church was accepted by the vestry on 4th March, 1768, and the two older churches were then retired from service. Following the death of the original contractor, the new building was completed by William Muir. The original contract had been extended in 1762, to include the erection, near the church, of a brick vestry house, sixteen by twenty feet in size, in which the first vestry meeting was held on the date of the New Church's acceptance. This little building was later allowed to be used as a schoolhouse.

Some idea of the richness of the new parish church's interior may be gained from an advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* for 23rd January, 1773: "For sale: a church organ, which for elegance and sweetness of tone is inferior to none on the Continent. Cased in mahogany, pipes gilt and the Imagery which adorns it striking and as large as life. £200. At present in Stratton-Major Church.—Wm. Dunlap" (Rector).

The vestry book mentions levies for minor repairs to this organ, but is silent as to the reasons why such a fine instrument should have been sold out of a new church, after only five years of service. However, the installation of the first church organs was often bitterly opposed by the conservative element in a congregation, who preferred the old practice of having the clerk "line out" the hymns with a tuning-fork, and this may have been a case of this sort. The vestry minutes close in 1783, without recording any change in the status of the parish church.

Of the three last colonial churches of Stratton Major Parish, only the Upper Church has survived, in spite of having been burned out at least once, during the 1¾ centuries since its final abandonment by the parish. The members of a branch of Lower King and Queen Baptist Church held services in the old building, during the early years of the nineteenth century, but their title and occupancy being disputed by other denominations, they decided to withdraw and build a church of their own. Having secured dismissal from the parent church for this purpose, in the year 1842, they were constituted as Olivet Baptist Church and built the first meeting-house of that name on a nearby site.²⁰

The old Upper Church then appears to have been used for a short time as a school, taught by Robert Stubbs, until its roof and interior woodwork were destroyed by fire. The church was completely rebuilt in 1850, the work including a new roof and floor, and was used for services by both Baptists and Methodists for a number of years. The Methodists finally bought out other interests in the building, including the claims of the owner of the surrounding land, and have occupied the church ever since. The minutes of the Gloucester Circuit of Methodist Churches show that this church was considered as a member of the circuit from 1818 to 1826, inclusive.²¹

The abandoned Lower Stratton Major Church also appears to have served as the cradle of a Baptist congregation, which began with the preaching of Elder William Todd in 1803. Two years later, the members of this congregation, which had been a branch of Lower King and Queen Baptist Church, built for themselves a small house of worship, across the road from the old Lower Church, and were constituted as Poroporone Baptist Church in 1805.²²

²⁰ McGill, *Baptist Churches within the Rappahannock Association*.

²¹ Minute book now at Bellamy Museum, Gloucester County.

²² McGill, *Baptist Churches within the Rappahannock Association*.

There is no evidence as to their meeting place from 1803 to 1805, but it seems reasonable to assume that it was the vacant Lower Church building of the colonial parish. An old resident, the late Mr. James Carr, remembered having seen the first Baptist Church at Poroporone still standing, across the road from the one built in 1805 and alongside of the old Lower Church, which he described as a stone building.²³ It seems certain that by "stone" he meant "masonry", of brick in this case, or else the old building had been stuccoed by some previous occupants.

Since it is a matter of record that this new congregation erected its first house of worship across the road from the colonial building, it seems probable that the earlier Baptist Church seen by Mr. Carr was the old Lower Church itself, cut off from its ruined north wing, which he saw still standing beside it. The old building, thus closed in and patched up, perhaps became unsafe for use and the new building resulted.

This new frame church was later moved, probably by being pulled down and re-erected, in whole or in part, on another site. It now stands near Shackelford's, on the south side of the old road up the Mattaponi, just west of its junction with the West Point-Saluda highway (State Route 33) and is still known as Poroporone Church.

The last Stratton Major Parish Church does not seem to have been used for services by other denominations, following its abandonment by the parish, which appears to have occurred soon after the close of the vestry book in 1783, since Stratton Major had no representation at the first Episcopal Convention of 1785 or at any later one. Left a helpless prey to the elements and to any passing vandal, the grand old building gradually went to complete ruin, during the next half century until the surrounding land was brought from Mr. Corbin by Mr. Peter T. Pollard, in order to extend his Milford estate to the county road up the Mattaponi River.

Since the Honorable Richard Corbin did not seem to have made any deed for the church site, the old church was claimed by Mr. Pollard, who proceeded to sell off its bricks until nothing was left of the ruins. Some of the aisle flagstones were used by Mr. Pollard for a walk at his home and later moved to the Dudley residence at West Point; these were finally given to St. John's Church, King William, a half century ago.²⁴ The site is still marked by the foundation trenches

²³ From notes of the late Reverend Arthur P. Gray.

²⁴ From letter to Rev. A. P. Gray from Mrs. H. J. Dudley, 16th October, 1930.

and quantities of broken brick, and it lies in the woods just east of Burnt Mill Creek, on the north side of State Route 14, 3½ miles east of the Upper Church and 1½ miles west of Shackelford's.

That St. Stephen's Parish was formed prior to 1674 is evident from a patent dated 18th February, 1673/4, to William Herndon for "64 acres in St. Stephen's Parish in New Kent".²⁵ Even earlier evidence of the existence of this parish is found in a deed of 10th June, 1673, from John Pigg to John Maddison, Sr., "of the parish of St Stephens in New Kent", conveying 200 acres of land in old Rappahannock County and recorded in the court of that county on 30th July, 1679.²⁶ The patent for Maddison's land in New Kent County reveals that it adjoined Pigg's property and lay on the north side of the Mattaponi River, in what is now King and Queen County.

The first church of St. Stephen's Parish is believed to have served, originally, as the Upper Church of Stratton Major, before being cut off with the new parish as its first Lower Church. The petition for the election of a new vestry for St. Stephen's Parish, on which this belief is based, is not dated, but an endorsement shows that it was of 1682, and it proves that the first St. Stephen's Church was then old enough to have become ruinous. It is by the "inhabitants and House Keepers of St. Stephen's parish in the County of New Kent" and rehearses "That your Petitioners have beene for severall yeares past burthened with an Illegall Vestry Elected . . . without the Knowledge or Consent of the parish . . . and of such Illiterate and Ignorant men as are . . . Ever Ruled and Awed by one or two particular persons, who are soe Insulting and of such Ill disposed & turbulent spirits . . . that noe Minister Cann or will stay with us . . . by w^{ch} meanes the Service of God is wholly neglected, our Church gon to Ruine and Church Desipline & Government almost Clerely laid aside".²⁷

The first Lower St. Stephen's Church was succeeded by the existing second church of that name, the magnificent cruciform structure of colonial brick, long known as Mattapony Church. The date of erection of this later structure has not been definitely established. A possible clue to this date is offered by what appears to be the builder's name, deeply cut into a brick above the west doorway of the church, The name is that of David Minetree, long believed to have been the English builder-architect imported by Carter Burwell in 1751, to construct his mansion at Carter's Grove.

²⁵ *Patent Book VI*, 502.

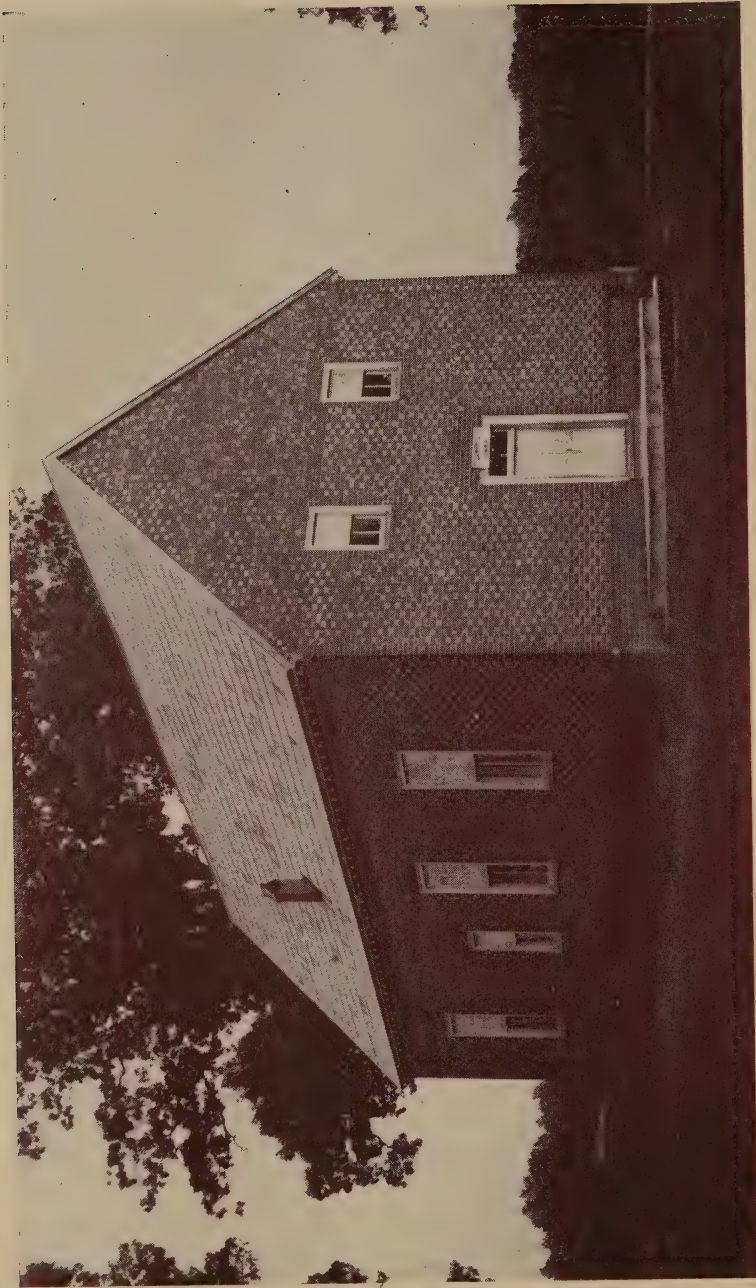
²⁶ *Rappahannock County Deeds, 1676-82*, VI, 82.

²⁷ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XLI, 198.



Mattapony Church.

PLATE 69



The possibility of dating the church, as not earlier than Minetree's supposed importation into the colony, is nullified by a closer scrutiny of the Burwell family papers, on which this belief was based.²⁸ This shows that the builder imported from England to do this work was actually Richard Bayliss and not Minetree, who was a resident of Williamsburg. The clue is made still more indefinite by the fact that David Minetree was one of three generations of colonial Virginia artisans of that name, any one of whom might have left his name on the church, as one of its builders.

A construction date somewhere between 1720 and 1760, for Mattapony Church, is suggested by the fact that the large cruciform colonial brick church, with pedimented doorways, was typical of that period. The possibility that the church was erected before 1733 is supported by the inscriptions on an ancient leather-bound Bible, which is still preserved in a glass case, within the present building. This Bible is marked on the fly-leaf: "The Lower Church of St. Stephen's Parish, in King and Queen, Anno 1733, June", and has stamped on its spine, in gilt letters, the words "Brick Church".

On the other hand, this Bible may have belonged to an earlier church on the same site and have been inherited by its successor. A marked similarity of general design between Mattapony Church and Abingdon Church, built about 1755 in the neighboring county of Gloucester, suggests that the two buildings may have been contemporary.

The present Mattapony Church stands on the south side of State Route 14, about eight miles north of King and Queen Courthouse. Positive evidence of the previous existence of another church in this locality is found in many references to "the Church Road" in patents of 1683 to 1703 for lands on Mantapike Creek, at whose head Mattapony Church is located.²⁹ That this previous church, the first Lower Church of St. Stephen's Parish, occupied the exact site of its successor, is strongly suggested by the presence of early eighteenth-century tombstones, close to the north and east sides of the existing Mattapony Church.

The existing Mattapony Church is built in the form of a Latin cross and is about eighty-five feet long, from east to west, by nearly sixty-five feet wide, from north to south, outside the upper walls, which are 27½

²⁸ Lancaster, *Historic Virginia Homes and Churches*, 53.

²⁹ *Patent Book VII*, 308, patent to Mr. Robert Byrd, 1683; *Patent Book VIII*, 15, patent to John Broach, 1689; *Patent Book IX*, 564, patent to John Maddison, 1703.

inches, or three brick lengths, thick and rest on 32-inch foundations. The body of the church is thirty-two feet eight inches wide and the transept twenty-six feet seven inches wide, outside. The nave is forty-three feet three inches long and the chancel wing projects fifteen feet three inches, with each transept wing nearly a foot longer.

There are only two windows in each side of the nave and in the east end of the chancel, and one window in each side of the other three arms of the cross. As usual, the main entrance is at the west end and there is a secondary entrance at each end of the transept. The roof is of the gable type and there are no windows in the gable ends. The brickwork is of the most perfect Flemish-bond pattern, with glazed headers.

A description of the venerable building's resplendent colonial interior, by one who saw it before any modernization took place, states that "At the north angle of the cross stood the old 'three-decker' pulpit with the great sounding-board, without which no Colonial church was complete. These two have passed away. In the east end of the cross was the chancel, with its reredos, on which in gilt letters are painted the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed, and the Ten Commandments with the name of God in Hebrew above them. It is Gothic in form, being surrounded and adorned at the apex by representations of lighted tapers. The coloring is still rich and beautiful and a retouch would make this reredos one of the most beautiful of its kind in Virginia". The same writer also mentions "the high family pews, with seats running around them on three sides . . . and the stout door to shut them in", and notes that the aisles were paved with marble slabs.³⁰

Mattapony Church is the only surviving colonial church of St. Stephen's Parish. Its preservation is due to the fact that, having been abandoned by its minister and people, a few years after the disestablishment of the Church of England, the deserted building was taken over, about 1803, by a group of Baptists, who repaired it thoroughly in 1817. Remaining a branch of Lower King and Queen Baptist Church, under the ministry of the Reverend William Todd, until 1828, the congregation was then constituted as Mattapony Baptist Church. The colonial interior was modernized in 1834 and a deed to the church (and to the 2¼-acre churchyard) was obtained in 1841. The original colonial font was later given to the Old Fork Church in Hanover County. The church building was completely burned out in the winter

³⁰ Bagby, *King and Queen County*, 57.

of 1922-3, but the walls were undamaged and the church was promptly rebuilt and is still in use by its Baptist congregation.³¹

One of the earliest recorded legislative proposals concerning St. Stephen's Parish is a bill passed by the House of Burgesses on 19th November, 1710, which is mentioned only by title, in the journal of this body, as "A Bill to Oblige the Minister of the parish of St. Stephen in the County of King and Queen to Officiate at the Chapell of the said parish and for Building a Church".³² This bill failed of passage by the Council and therefore did not become law.

The chapel mentioned in the bill seems to have been the only one built for St. Stephen's Parish and is believed to have stood on the south side of the old River Road up the Mattaponi River, just east of the stream now known as Chapel Hill Branch, after the rise of ground that formed the old church's site. The title of the act suggests that in 1710, this chapel was already old enough to have become unsuitable for service, and the Act of 1723, dividing the parish, refers to "the Old Chappel Bridge" over the stream near its site. It seems probable that it was abandoned even before the parish became dormant after the Revolutionary War. No trace of its foundation is visible at the site, which has long been under cultivation, but the hillside was formerly covered with old bricks thrown out of the field where the chapel once stood. It was presumably a frame building, with brick underpinning.

This bill appears to have represented an effort to force the St. Stephen's vestry to provide a church building in the populous upper section of the parish. It seems probable that it was the vestry's neglect to furnish church services in this part of the county which led, a few years later, to its being cut off as a separate parish.

The preamble of the Act of 1723, creating Drysdale Parish out of the upper part of St. Stephen's Parish, above Chapel Hill Branch, cites as the reason for the division that "many Inconveniences attend the Upper Inhabitants of the parish of St. Stephen . . . by reason of their great distance from any Church or Chappel in their Said parish".³³ The wording of this preamble clearly indicates that there was no house of worship in the area formed into the new parish. Although it would have been more usual for "the Freeholders and Housekeepers" of the new parish to meet at some church already standing within its borders, to elect their first vestry, they were required by the

³¹ Hundley, *History of Mattaponi Baptist Church*, 73.

³² McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses, 1702-12*, 268.

³³ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVIII, 116.

Act to meet at the Upper Church of St. Stephen's, which the preamble already quoted proves was not within the bounds of Drysdale Parish.

This Upper St. Stephen's Church was always known as the Apple Tree Church, for reasons which have not been recorded. It stood on a slight elevation just north of the old River Road, about six miles above Walkerton and a quarter mile west of the headwater fork of London Swamp. The date of its construction is unknown, but it may have been built, soon after the formation of the parish, to supply the need of an upper church.

The Apple Tree Church was a brick building about fifty-four by thirty feet, in the clear, with a north wing twenty-five feet wide, extending twenty-three feet from the main structure, as revealed by the foundation trenches plainly evident at its site, which is now covered by woods. The old building was abandoned after the Revolution and stood empty and desolate for many years. It is traditional in the Ryland family that the Apple Tree Church's site was surrounded on three sides by the land of an ancestor, Josiah Ryland of Farmington. The fourth side adjoined Mr. William Temple's property, and to settle a dispute between them as to the ownership of the building, Mr. Temple allegedly burned it.³⁴

The preamble of the Act of 1723 also proves that the first parish church of Drysdale could not have been in existence at the date of the parish's formation. This first Drysdale parish church was the brick building always known as the Park Church, from its proximity to Beverley Park, the home of Robert Beverley, Jr., the colonial historian of Virginia. The conclusion drawn from the Act as to the date of this church's construction is supported by the journal kept by John Fontaine, when he accompanied Governor Spotswood on his famous trip with "the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe". In this journal, Fontaine records of their stay at Beverley Park, en route, that on 17th June, 1715, "we mounted on horses, Mr. Beverley with us, and we went about seven miles to his Parish Church, where we had a good sermon from a Frenchman named Mr. De Latane".³⁵

Since the church attended was almost certainly Upper Piscataway Church in Essex County, of which the Reverend Lewis Latané was then the rector, it seems assured that the Park Church had not yet been built, or Mr. Beverley would have taken his guests to the new church

³⁴ Letter dated 22nd June, 1942, from Prof. Garnett Ryland, Richmond, Va., to the author.

³⁵ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XX, 508.

only two miles from his house, in preference to riding much further to a church in the next county.

It is apparent, therefore, that the Park Church was constructed immediately after the formation of Drysdale Parish in 1723, in order to supply the complete lack of a church within the bounds of the parish. There is no record of any other colonial church having been built for Drysdale Parish in the present King and Queen County.

The Park Church was abandoned after the Revolution, like so many other colonial churches and, after years of neglect, was offered for sale in 1810, by the owner of the surrounding land, to the congregation of the Upper King and Queen Baptist Church. As they considered the price exorbitant, they refused the offer and the old building went to ruin and disappeared many years ago.³⁶

The site of the Park Church lies on the west side of State Route 14 (which coincides with the colonial road at this point), two and a half miles above Newtown and a mile east of Beverley Creek, which forms the present boundary between King and Queen and Caroline Counties. The remains of its foundation, which are quite apparent in an open field near the highway, suggest that it was a large, cross-shaped church, possibly seventy-five by seventy-five feet in size, over all, but the ground at the site is too full of brick to permit the use of a sounding rod.

The colonial glebe house of Drysdale Parish, perhaps built soon after the church, is still standing 1½ miles east of the church's site, and has long been used as a residence. It is a fine example of glazed-header, Flemish-bond brickwork, 1½ stories high, with gable roof and dormer windows.

The formation of St. John's Parish out of the northern section of Pamunkey Neck, including parts of St. Stephen's and Stratton Major Parishes in King and Queen County, was authorized by an order of the House of Burgesses, dated 8th June, 1680, that in response to "The Petition of the Inhabitants of Pamunkey Neck praying that they may be made a Parish and it being Averred to this Assembly that part of that Neck belongs to St. Peter's parish soe farre as Johns Creek this Assembly doe declare and Order that they have liberty to make a Parish downward from the said Johns Creek and Soe up the Ridge on Mattaponie Side, if they thinke Convenient".³⁷

The southern section of the neck was erroneously "returned" to St. John's Parish at the formation of King and Queen County in

³⁶ *Records of Upper King and Queen Baptist Church.*

³⁷ McIlwaine, *Journal of House of Burgesses, 1659-93*, 150.

1691. Actually, it was added to the new parish by being taken from St. Peter's Parish, of which it had been a part since the latter's formation in 1678. The result of this addition was to make St. John's Parish coterminous with Pamunkey Neck and therefore with King William County, at its formation in 1701.

Since King William County was once a part of King and Queen County and its original coterminous parish of Stratton Major, it is only natural that the first church in the daughter county should have been a Pamunkey Neck chapel of ease for this original parish. It is related in the history of the Scottish Clan Munro that the Reverend John Munro, Sr., emigrated to Virginia about 1650 and was for several years minister at Pomonkie.³⁸ The old Pamunkey Chapel is now believed to have stood at West Point, undoubtedly the "Pomonkie" of the Munro tradition, and either became the first parish church of St. John's Parish, at its creation in 1680, or was replaced by a new building on the same site.

Although the Pamunkey Neck, like the region south of Blackwater Swamp in Southeastern Virginia, was considered Indian country after the Massacre of 1644 and not thrown open to general settlement until the close of the seventeenth century,³⁹ the successful petition for a parish there in 1680 is ample evidence that extensive seating of these lands by the English had already taken place.

As further substantiation of extensive settlement in Pamunkey Neck, it is apparent that by the end of the seventeenth century there had been built for St. John's Parish, in addition to the old parish church at West Point, not only an upper church but a frontier chapel, located more than fifteen miles up the peninsula. The earliest recorded reference to this first Upper Church of St. John's Parish is found in a deed of 20th August, 1703, from Thomas West to John Russell for 80 acres of woodland in the parish, bounded "down the Churchfeild branch . . . to . . . the mouth of the said Branch in Bull Swamp".⁴⁰

The term "Church field" was regularly used in colonial records to designate the site of a church, and the spot involved here is more closely defined by a deed of 25th August, 1796, from Archibald and Richard Frazer to William Alvey for 204 acres on the "side of main County Road leading from the Courthouse . . . of King William to

³⁸ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XIII, 231.

³⁹ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council*, I, 393.

⁴⁰ *King William County Records*, 1702-07, I, 128.

Frazers Ferry and in parish of St. Johns", bounded down "the main road . . . to West Point from King William Courthouse . . . to a Cedar Corner to W^m Newman at the old Church".⁴¹

A study of the landmarks cited in these deeds locates this old church near the southeast corner of the intersection between the present State Route 626 and the cross road (Route 625) leading to the ancient Frazer's Ferry, at the present Wakema. No trace was discovered of the foundation of this early church, but it undoubtedly existed, and it seems likely that it was a frame building, perhaps set up on wooden blocks instead of a brick foundation.

The frontier chapel is almost as definitely located by a series of three land patents, all to the same man, William Maybank. The first of these patents, dated 25th April, 1701, is for 105 acres "lying in St. Johns parish in Pamunkey Neck in King and Queen County amongst the branches of the Acquinton . . . beginning at an Ash on the Chappell branch and running . . . to Gravett's branch".⁴² The second and third patents are both dated 6th April, 1712, one of them being for 39 acres in the above parish and county "joining on the Glebe Land, Heydens and his own land Beginning at . . . a corner of Heyden's Land in the Chappell Branch" and the other for 83 acres, situated as before and "bounded . . . by the Chappell Lands and the Lands of Gravett and Pemberton".⁴³

These patents afford conclusive proof that there was a chapel of St. John's Parish on Acquinton Creek, prior to 1701, and that glebe lands for the support of a minister had been laid off at its site, in accordance with custom. This Acquinton Chapel appears to have been the building involved in a quarrel between the Reverend John Monro, rector, and the vestry of St. John's Parish, which resulted in the churchwardens' "shutting the church doors" against him, a colonial vestry's last resort in an effort to rid their parish of an unpopular minister, legally inducted for life.

The vestry's action was carried before the colonial council on the 1st May, 1695, by "the peticon of M^r John Monro Clerk, setting forth that on the 28th of April last he was hindred from officiating in the Chapell of S^t John's Parish, where he hath been Minister two years, the Chapell door's being Nayled & lock'd, a great Congregation present, the said Monro praying to be releived from such Irregular

⁴¹ *King William County Records*, III, 3.

⁴² *Patent Book IX*, 356.

⁴³ *Patent Book X*, 64.

& Illegal proceedings". In acting upon this complaint, the council ordered the vestry to send in their reply, a week later, and "that in the mean tyme the Church and Chapell door's be opened to the said Monro, that he may performe Divine service as formerly".⁴⁴

The vestry's reply to council makes it apparent that their action followed the minister's refusal to accept a cut of one-sixth of the standard annual salary of 16000 pounds of tobacco, such a cut being another weapon often employed by a colonial vestry in the struggle to oust an unwanted minister.⁴⁵ The council accepted the vestry's specious excuses for their conduct by ruling that "it doth not appear the Chapell doors were shutt to keep M^r Monro out from officiating as Minister of the said Parish but to keep out the Catle from defyling the said Chapell, and that [the reason why] the Doors of the said Chapell were not open when M^r Monro attended to performe Divine Services was, the Church Wardens presuming the Parish to be Vacant of a Minister".⁴⁶

The vestry patched up the quarrel by expressing their willingness "to continue M^r Monro their Minister" and to call a special meeting to agree on his salary. Eight years later, they exposed their true feelings, in a further complaint against their rector, by ingenuously declaring "that we have no p'sonal prejudice against the Rev. M^r J^{no} Monro, our present minister, upon the account that he is of the Scottish Nation (Tho We must confess an English man would be more acceptable)".⁴⁷

In the Act of 2nd November, 1720, creating St. Margaret's Parish out of the upper parts of St. John's Parish, it was ordered that the "Freeholders and Housekeepers" of the new parish should "meet at the Chappell in their Said parish" to elect their first vestry.⁴⁸ Since the frontier chapel on Acquinton Creek did not lie within the bounds of the newly-formed parish, it is apparent that the chapel mentioned in the Act was a different building. As the patents previously quoted prove that the parish already owned lands at the Acquinton Chapel, the chapel in St. Margaret's Parish appears to have been the one whose site was acquired by the St. John's vestry through a patent of 17th August, 1720, to "William Aylett and Augustine Moore Churchwardens of St. John's Parish in the County of King William

⁴⁴ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council*, I, 325.

⁴⁵ *Calendar of State Papers*, I, 49.

⁴⁶ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council*, I, 328.

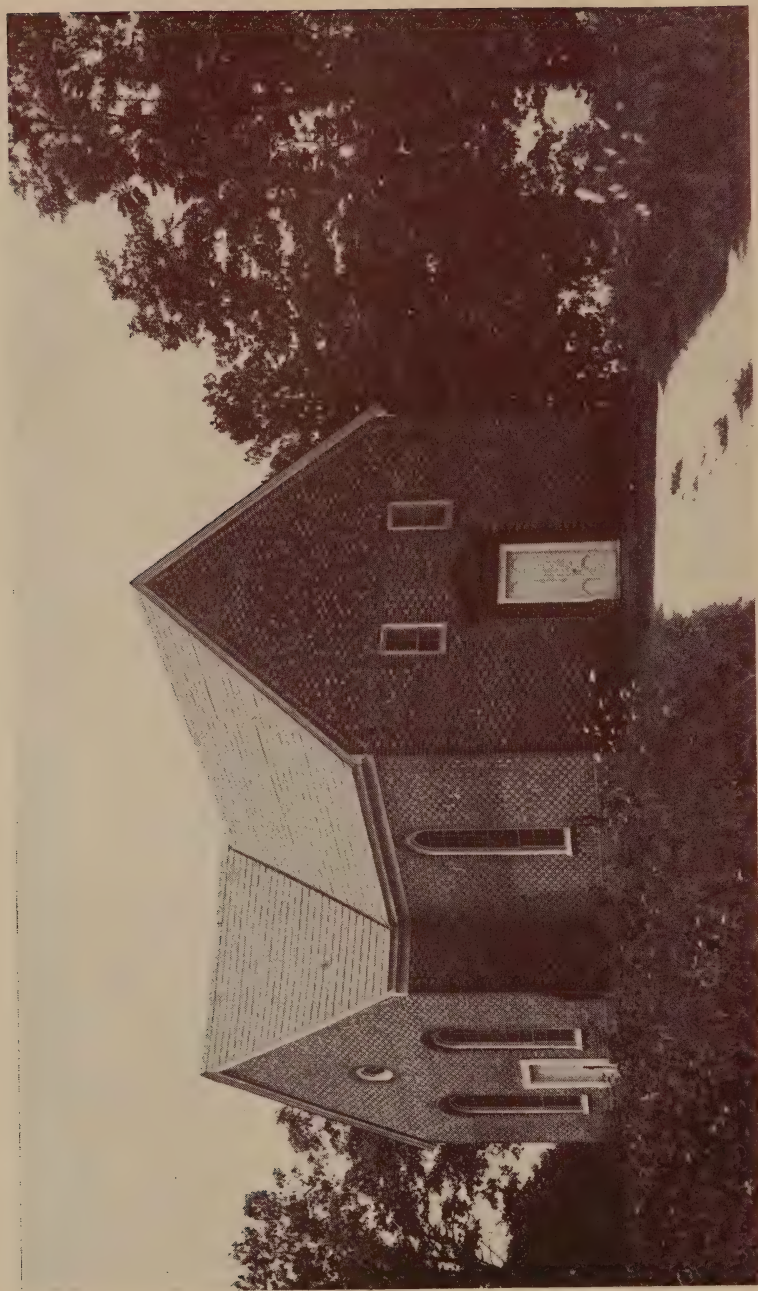
⁴⁷ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, VIII, 368.

⁴⁸ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVIII, 110.



PLATE 71

Acquinton Church ruins.



. . . for the use of the Parish . . . 300 A. lying . . . in the parish and County aforesaid upon which the Chappell stands . . . Beginning at a hickory by the side of the branch near the Chappell, etc.”⁴⁹

The patent gives no definite clue as to the geographical location of this chapel or to its age, but it seems probable that it was a new building and stood from seven to ten miles further up the parish than the Acquinton Chapel. If this supposition be correct, it may well have occupied the site of the existing Cattail Church, two and a half miles southwest of Aylett at the present hamlet of Turpin, formerly Venter. It is altogether likely that it was the only house of worship in the new parish at its formation and served as its first parish church until the construction of the Bull Church, about 1740, several miles west of Penola, in the present Caroline County.

The same Act of 1720 provides that “WHEREAS the Two Churches fall both in the Lower Parish” (i. e., St. John’s) “and have been lately repaired and enlarged and it will be necessary that another new Church be forthwith built in the Parish of St. Margaret, BE it therefore ENACTED . . . That the Vestry of St. John’s as it shall be after the division . . . do levy for the use of the Said parish of St. Margaret towards building them a New Church Twenty-five Thousand Pounds of Tobacco and Cask”.

It is believed that the new church, whose construction was contemplated in the Act, was the existing Mangohick Church, which stands on the south side of State Route 30, five miles east of its junction with U. S. Route 2, from Richmond to Fredericksburg. The church’s name is of Indian origin and is derived from Mangohick Creek, near whose head it is located.⁵⁰ Since the amount to be levied by St. John’s Parish represented little more than a quarter of this church’s probable construction cost, it seems likely that several years elapsed before the new parish was financially able to undertake the erection of the building, for it was still new when Colonel Byrd visited it in 1732.

In his entertaining journal of his “Progress to the Mines”, in October of that year, Byrd records that on his return trip he crossed the Mattaponi River at Norman’s Ford, after having travelled 12 miles from the first Caroline Courthouse, which lay 2 miles further north than the present courthouse at Bowling Green. Beyond the river crossing, he “slanted down to King William County Road. We kept

⁴⁹ *Patent Book XI*, 25.

⁵⁰ *King William County Records*, II, 20.

along that for about 12 Miles, as far as the New Brick Church, After that I took a blind path that carried to several of Col. Jones' quarters, which border upon my own".⁵¹

It is evident that Byrd crossed the Mattaponi River at Samuel Norment's plantation, where a ferry had been established by an Act of Assembly passed only four years earlier.⁵² Since the patent for Norment's land makes it clear that the river is fordable in that locality, it seems probable that Byrd did not avail himself of the ferry service, but rode his horse through the shallows, which would account for his reference to the crossing point by the name of Norman's (Norment's) Ford. Samuel Norment's plantation lay on the south side of the Mattaponi River, just above Reedy Swamp and about 8 miles above the present King William-Caroline County line, measured along the winding stream.⁵³

After crossing the river, Byrd "slanted down" for 6 miles to reach the old ridge road to King William County at a point just above the present Bowersville, thus going around the heads of the five swamps which lay between him and his objective. After reaching the ridge road, he followed it for exactly 6 miles to reach Mangohick Church, from which a "blind path" only 3 miles long would have brought him to his five "quarters" or plantations, on the King William side of the Pamunkey River.

Various suggestions have been made as to the identity of the "New Church" mentioned by Byrd, but in any interpretation of his account, it must be remembered that, to him, the "King William County Road" would have been the one down the Pamunkey River side of the county, past his plantations, and not the road along the Mattaponi. Furthermore, in all of Byrd's accounts of his travels, the mileages given are in a continuous sequence, so that the 12 miles along the King William County Road represented the entire distance from the river-crossing to the church.

It seems probable that Mangohick Church was the building mentioned in a petition of 1738 to the colonial Council by "Benjamin Walker, Gent . . . and many other Inhabitants of St. Margaret's parish complaining that John Brunskill Clerk Minister of the said Parish hath Neglected to perform Divine Service at a Chapel of Ease built Several Years agoe for the Convenience of a Great Number of Families living

⁵¹ Bassett, *Writings of Col. Wm. Byrd*, 361.

⁵² Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 92.

⁵³ *Patent Book XI*, 74.

remote from the Church of the said parish and refusing to preach or Read prayers there as by Law he is obliged".⁵⁴ The date and wording of this petition are consistent with our previous conclusion that Mangohick Church was built prior to 1732, as a chapel of ease for St. Margaret's Parish.

Mangohick Church became the Upper Church of St. David's Parish at its formation in 1744 and seems to have been abandoned by the parish soon after the Revolutionary War. After many years of use as a "free church", available for services by any and all denominations, it was deeded after the Civil War to a colored Baptist congregation, who have occupied it for three quarters of a century.

This old church is a rectangular building of glazed-header, Flemish-bond brick, about sixty-two by twenty-eight feet, outside the upper walls, with a gable roof. There are two windows in each side of the nave and in the east end, and one in each side of the chancel. The church has the conventional west and south doorways, and there is the usual gallery in the west end of the nave, lighted by a pair of small rectangular windows above the main entrance. The presence of a similar window in the north side of the church, back of the probable location of the pulpit but out of line with the south doorway, suggests that there was a great pew between the pulpit and chancel, in addition to the two regularly placed at the sides of the communion table. In keeping with this church's assumed construction as a simple chapel of ease, all its doors and windows had square heads with plain jack-arch trim, except in the west end, where ordinary relieving-arches were used.

The two churches mentioned in the Act of 1720 as being left standing in St. John's Parish at the formation of St. Margaret's Parish in that year, appear to have been the first Upper Church, on the road to Frazer's Ferry, and the old Lower Church at West Point. Although the Act states that both of these churches had then been "recently repaired and enlarged", it is evident that they had become too old to be serviceable by 1729, when the vestry decided upon their replacement.

This decision is expressed in a vestry order of 22nd December, 1729, made at a meeting at the old Lower Church, to the effect that "We the Vestry having viewed the decays of this Church, We find it to be so bad, that it is unanimously agreed not to expend any money towards the Repairing of it, but we order that the workmen viz^t M^r

⁵⁴ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council*, IV, 423.

Thomas Palmer and M^r Charles Palmer close up the Breaches they have made in it and leave it. It is likewise ordered that Two new Churches be built of equal Dimensions and goodness in this Parish and that Publick notice be given for Workmen to meet at the next Vestry . . . on the 8th day of January next, to agree with an Undertaker to build the lower Church".⁵⁵

From the reference to the "breaches" made in the walls of the old Lower Church, it seems evident that it was a brick building. It is believed to have occupied the site of the present Baptist Church at West Point, where a colonial tombstone of 1728 is still to be seen and evidence of many other graves was encountered, during construction of the existing church building in 1926.

The order for construction of two new churches was countermanded by a vestry order of 19th November, 1731, and a proposal substituted, on grounds of economy, "that one Church and no more be built for the use of this Parish".⁵⁶ This change proved so unpopular that it resulted in a petition to Council, submitted 7th June, 1732, by "the greater part of the Freeholders & Inhabitants of St. Johns Parish in the County of King William complaining that the Vestry of the s^d parish lately passed an Order for discontinuing the two Churches in the s^d parish & for erecting one Church in lieu thereof in the Centre of the s^d parish". Upon consideration of a map, showing the inconvenience of the proposed arrangement, the Council ordered that the vestry "according to their first Order . . . apply themselves to the erecting two churches in the most convenient places in the s^d parish for the general Ease of the Inhabitants".⁵⁷

The two churches erected in accordance with this order of council were the existing St. John's Church and Acquinton Church, both being rectangular brick buildings, subsequently enlarged to T shape by addition of a north wing. Both may be presumed to have been completed about two years after the date of the order, or in 1734.

Acquinton Church is believed to have been erected on the exact site of the old Acquinton Chapel, near a headwater branch of the creek for which both church and chapel were named. The only part of the church that has survived is the north wing, probably added during the decade from 1755 to 1765, when the increase in population in each of the neighboring parishes in King and Queen County

⁵⁵ *Calendar of State Papers*, I, 215.

⁵⁶ *Calendar of State Papers*, I, 216.

⁵⁷ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council*, IV, 272.



PLATE 73

Cattail Church.

required the building of a large new church. The enlarged church is said to have been so crowded, under the ministry of the eloquent Parson Henry Skyren, the last colonial rector of the parish, that the people brought extra seats and sat in the aisles to hear him.

There is a local tradition that Acquinton Church was not erected by the parish, but by a private individual named Pynes, on his own land, and then given to the vestry, the property to revert to his own estate in case of non-use.⁵⁸ In view of the fact that the church stood on land owned by the parish, from an early date, and that its construction by the parish vestry was ordered by the colonial Council, this tradition cannot be substantiated.

The church was abandoned by the parish, about the year 1800, and later became a free church, used in common by the Baptists, Methodists, Christians and occasionally the Episcopalians. It went almost completely to ruin, after the Civil War, until in 1875 the Methodists bought out the interests of the Episcopal Church and thus acquired the building. Since the later wing was then the only portion that was still sound, the new owners tore down the original part of the church and used the bricks to extend and close the south end of the wing and to fill in a gully fifty feet behind the church.⁵⁹

The back-filled foundation trenches at the site show that the church was originally about fifty-eight by twenty-nine feet, inside, with walls 22½ inches thick. The north wing projected from near the middle of the building and was thirty-four feet long by twenty-six feet wide, inside the existing walls. At its conversion into a separate building, this wing was extended 14½ feet at the south end, making the remodelled church about fifty by thirty feet, outside the walls. The wing was originally of glazed-header, Flemish-bond brickwork, but was stuccoed some years after being rebuilt. Its end wall has a level top, showing that the roof was once hipped. The colonial interior was repaired and preserved, so that the high pulpit stood just to the left of the new south entrance and the old high-backed pews faced both pulpit and door, as in the original arrangement.

The church was finally abandoned by the Methodists, some years ago, and was deeded back to the Episcopalians in 1932, with a view to its preservation as a memorial,⁶⁰ but it is now completely stripped of its interior woodwork and rapidly crumbling to pieces, beneath its

⁵⁸ *Richmond News Leader*, July 17, 1936 (Questions and Answers Dept.).

⁵⁹ Notes of the late Reverend Arthur P. Gray.

⁶⁰ Notes of the late Reverend Arthur P. Gray.

half-rotten roof. The site lies on the north side of the fork where State Route 618 turns off from State Route 629, two miles southwest of the latter's junction with State Route 30, just west of King William Court-house.

The existing St. John's Church is the only colonial house of worship in the two counties that remains an Episcopal Church. It stands on the south side of State Route 627, a section of the old county road which has been cut off from State Route 30 by a straightening of the right-of-way, about ten miles above West Point and two miles due south of the old first Upper Church's site. The building is of Flemish-bond colonial red brick, with glazed headers, and has a gable roof. The older part of the church, which of course lies east-and-west, is fifty feet three inches long by thirty feet three inches wide, outside, and the north wing is twenty-eight feet nine inches in outside width and extends twenty-four feet from the north wall, five feet off center of its length, toward the east end of the building.

There are three windows in the south side of the church and two in the east end of the chancel. Only one window is left in the north side of the older building, near its west end, and there is one window in each side of the wing and two smaller ones in its gable, to light the gallery. The original gallery in the west end of the nave also survives. A colonial pedimented doorway still remains in the west end of the church and another one in the north end of the wing, but the original south doorway was closed up in modern times, to permit the altar and reredos to be installed on that side of the building, and has been replaced by a smaller doorway in the east end. The reredos is evidently not original with the building, being too wide for the space between any two of the windows, and it may have come from Acquinton Church. The date 1734, deeply cut in the molded brick pediment of the south doorway at the original church's completion, has been preserved and set in a corresponding location over the north entrance, and is accompanied by the initials I. H.

Old St. John's Church is occasionally used for memorial services and is under the care of an association formed for its preservation. Several tablets have been placed in the church, commemorating persons prominent in the history of the parish.

The last colonial church erected in King William County appears to have been built in accordance with the Act of 1744, creating St. David's Parish out of the upper end of St. John's Parish and the section of St. Margaret's Parish below the Caroline County line. This

Act states that "whereas the vestry of the parish of St. Margaret's have agreed to build a church in the said parish of St. David, without any assistance of the tithables taken out of the parish of St. John", they were required "within the four years, next following" to carry out their agreement by building a church for St. David's Parish "of the same dimensions as the said middle church".⁶¹ The Act does not identify the middle church mentioned, but it seems probable that it was Reedy Church, the lower of two church buildings apparently built in 1740 for St. Margaret's Parish, and hence its middle church, with reference to the chapel at Mangohick and the parish church, west of Penola.

The church, whose construction resulted from this provision in the Act of 1744, appears to have been the first St. David's Parish Church, long known as Cattail Church, from its proximity to the swamp of that name. If started within the specified time limit, or by 1748, this church would have been completed in two or three years. This is consistent with the construction date of 1751, found cut in a brick over the west doorway and placed on its cornerstone at its last remodelling, and with the earliest known documentary reference to the church, in a patent of 1752. The building is rectangular, without any wing, and seems to have been about sixty by thirty feet, inside, originally.

Cattail Church, if it actually occupied the site of a chapel of St. John's Parish, as suggested earlier in this article, would have been the second parish church of St. David's, as this chapel would undoubtedly have been pressed into service as a temporary parish church, pending the construction of a better one. It is noteworthy that the wording of the Act creating St. David's Parish gives no hint that any such situation obtained.

Cattail Church went through the usual course of abandonment and later use as a free church, but the old building having received no upkeep from those using it, its roof finally fell in and its ruins were turned over to the colored Mt. Sinai Baptist congregation, to save it from complete destruction. The present occupants have shortened the church ten feet at the east end. They have completely remodelled the old building, out of all semblance of a colonial church, adding two steeples at the west end, buttressing the weakened walls and giving the whole structure a coat of stucco, to hide the scars left by early neglect and later alterations. Although so greatly changed in appearance, Cattail Church must still be listed as one of the surviving colonial churches of Virginia.

⁶¹ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, V, 254.

CHAPTER XIV.

Accomack and Northampton County Churches

THE EASTERN SHORE of Virginia was one of the first regions to be explored and settled by the colonists, after the founding of Jamestown, and its early colonial churches are therefore of exceptional antiquity and historic interest. As a result of the loss of the earliest parish annals, the record of these Accomack and Northampton churches is incomplete, but late eighteenth-century vestry books have been preserved for two of the parishes, and one of these books has been reopened and carried down to the present day. The history of these churches is greatly enriched by the existence of the earliest continuous county archives in the United States, at the Northampton County court-house in Eastville, and the records at Accomack court-house extend back to the county's establishment.

The first settlement of the Eastern Shore was prompted by the Jamestown colonists' need of salt to preserve food for winter use, and took place in 1614, when about twenty men were sent to the peninsula, to make salt and catch fish for the parent colony. This settlement, having been made during Sir Thomas Dale's deputy-governorship, was named Dale's Gift in his honor.¹

As described by John Rolfe in 1616, the settlement was established "on the sea shore, near unto Cape Charles". Details of men were sent from Dale's Gift to carry on the salt works, which were first set up on Smith Island, just east of Cape Charles. The most probable location for this first settlement appears to have been on the mainland, opposite the western end of the island and about two miles east of the point of the cape.² This earliest settlement was a temporary one and seems to have endured only five years, at most.

Even before the abandonment of the Dale's Gift base of operations, the first permanent settlement on the Eastern Shore seems to have been started along the banks of Old Plantation Creek, but this land was seated by individuals and not by the colonial government.

The second permanent settlement on the peninsula was officially established in 1620, on the point between King's Creek and Cheriton

¹ Neill, *Virginia Company of London*, 141.

² Wise, *Ye Kingdome of Accawmacke*, 22.

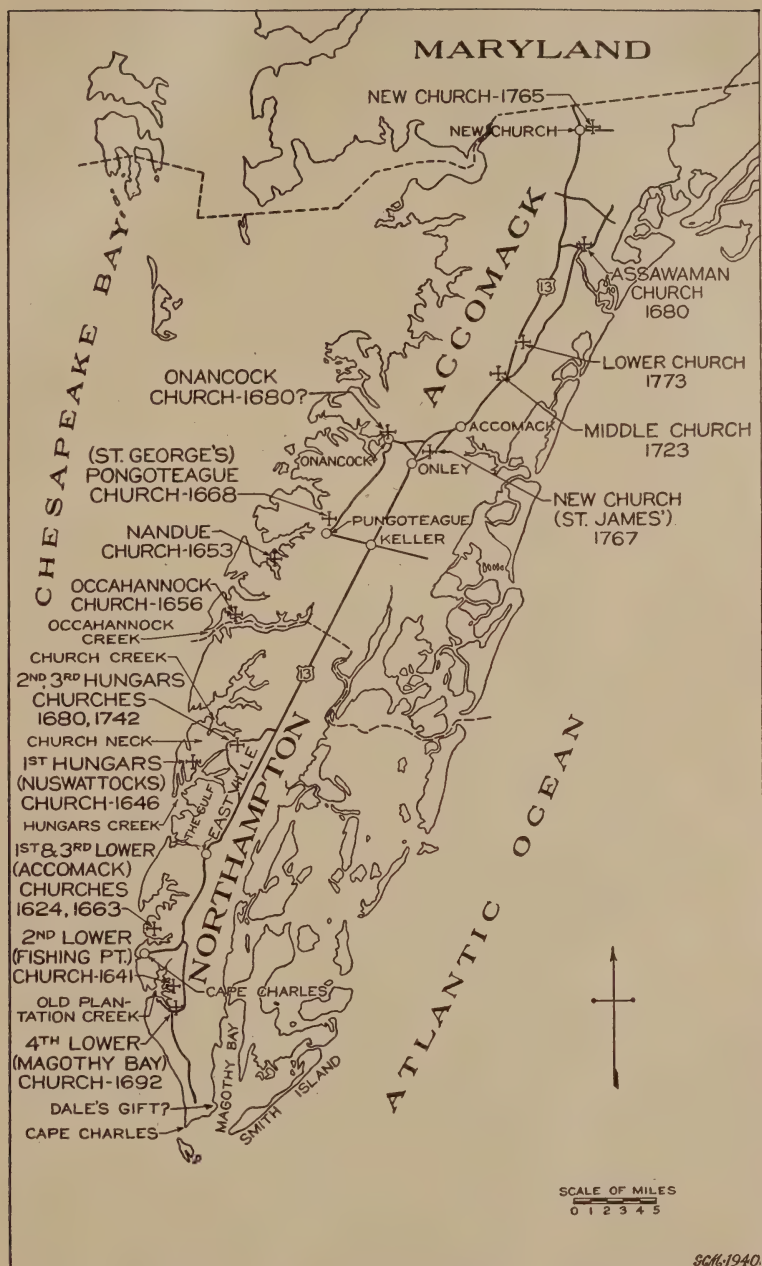


PLATE 74 Map of Eastern Shore of Virginia.

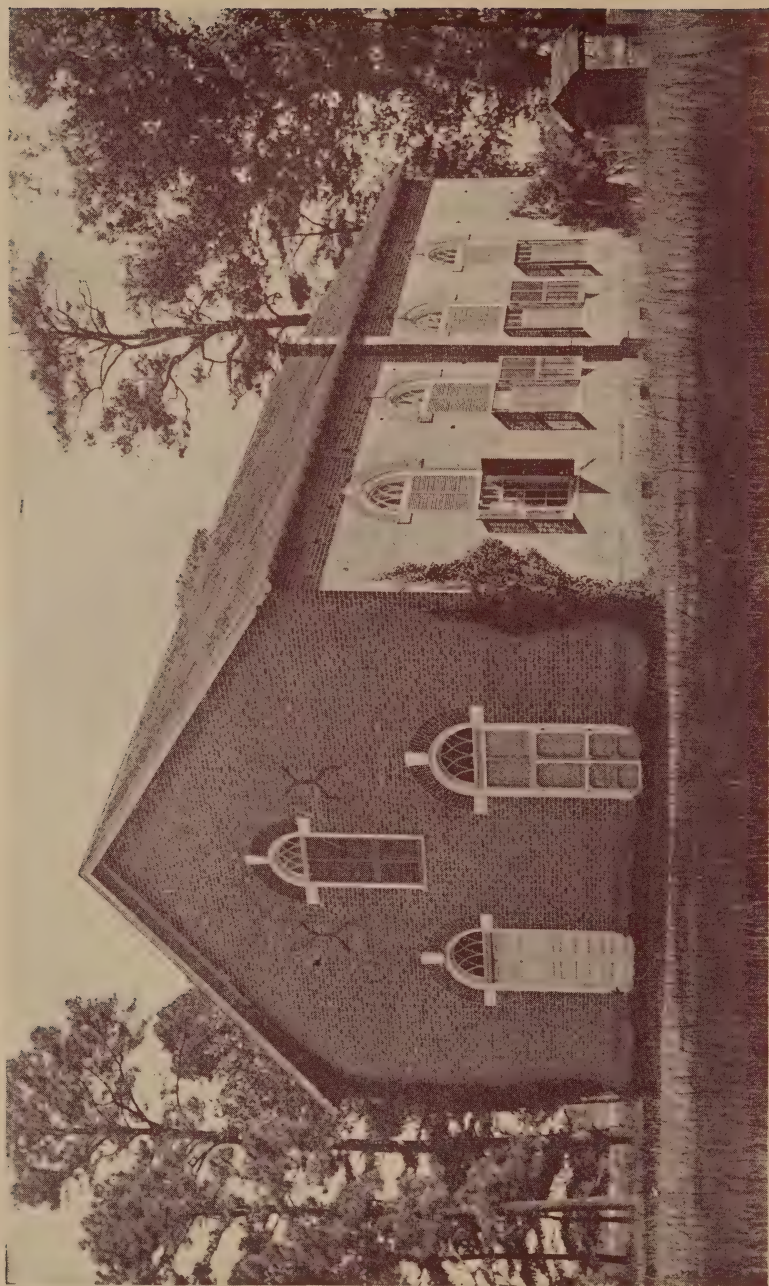


PLATE 75

Hungars Church.

Inlet (then known as Accomack Creek), where lands had been laid out for the Virginia Company of London, proprietors of the colony.³

The Indian name for the Eastern Shore territory was "Accomack", signifying "the other-side-place",⁴ and this name was given to this second permanent settlement on King's Creek. Like most names of Indian origin, Accomack occurs in a great variety of spellings, ranging from Acchawmacke in the earliest entries to Accomako in a parish report of 1724. It is noteworthy that the most usual colonial form, Accomack, adopted in this article, has recently been made the official spelling by act of assembly.

The Eastern Shore settlement became the county of Accomack as one of the eight original shires established in 1634, when the Virginia colony was first organized in county form.⁵ In 1642/3, the new county was renamed Northampton,⁶ probably through the influence of Colonel Obedience Robins, a prominent early settler from that shire in England.⁷ No legislative enactment can be found for the division of the Eastern Shore into two counties, but there is ample evidence that it took place in 1662, the lower county remaining Northampton, while the upper one resumed the original name of Accomack. The upper county was reunited with Northampton in 1670, but the two counties resumed their separate status three years later and have remained distinct down to this day.

Since a minister, the Reverend Francis Bolton, was assigned to service on the Eastern Shore as early as 1623,⁸ it seems evident that the Accomack settlement constituted one of the plantation parishes which were a feature of pioneer colonial organization in Virginia. As in other cases, this original parish was undoubtedly known by the name of the plantation that composed it and was therefore called Accomack.

The first formal erection of parishes on the Eastern Shore was effected by act of assembly in March, 1642/3, when Accomack County became Northampton and, together with the parish coterminous with it, was divided into two unnamed parishes.⁹ The upper of these two parishes extended from Nuswattocks Creek to King's Creek and the

³ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁵ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 224.

⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 249.

⁷ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 252.

⁸ Goodwin, *Colonial Church in Virginia*, 252.

⁹ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 249.

lower from King's Creek to the southern end of the county at Smith Island, both divisions including the full width of the peninsula. A little-known act of assembly of November, 1647, which is not found in Hening's "Statutes at Large", even by title, appears to be a re-enactment of the original act of 1643 and divides Northampton County into parishes, named Upper and Lower.¹⁰ This later act gives no northern limit for the Upper Parish and sets the boundary between the parishes six miles further north, at Savage's Creek, now known as "the Gulf", but mentioned in an early land patent as "Savadge's creek formerly called Wiscoponson".¹¹

This Upper Parish, at first called only by that name, soon became known as Nuswattocks Parish and, shortly afterward, as Hungars Parish. The Lower Parish of Northampton County, throughout the whole of its separate existence, is only mentioned in the county records under that title, although it is erroneously designated as Northampton Parish in the list of Virginia parishes reported in 1680.¹² The two parishes were reunited in 1691, under the name of Hungars Parish, which thus became coterminous with Northampton County and remains so to this day.¹³

With the rapid extension of settlement to the northern end of the peninsula, the need arose for an additional parish in the upper section of the Eastern Shore. In November, 1652, it was therefore enacted by the general assembly "That the south side of Ocquhanocke Creeke in the county of Northampton and so upwards be a peculiar parish and called by the name of Ocquhanocke Parish."¹⁴ The effect of this act was to fix the upper boundary of Hungars Parish at Occahan-nock Creek, although it was not until 1677,¹⁵ fifteen years after the formation of Accomack County, that this stream became the dividing line between the two counties, as at present.¹⁶ The use of the words "and so upwards" in this act indicates that the new parish had indefinite extension northward, terminated only by the Maryland-Virginia line.

This third parish, erected in 1652, does not appear to have been effectively organized until after the division of the Eastern Shore into

¹⁰ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XXIII, 249.

¹¹ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 524.

¹² *Virginia Historical Magazine*, I, 244.

¹³ *Northampton County Orders, Wills*, 1689-98, XVII, 117.

¹⁴ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 374.

¹⁵ *Northampton County Orders, Wills*, 1674-79, XII, 200.

¹⁶ McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses*, 1659-93, 77.

two counties, which took place in 1662. For this reason, the parish, when finally set up by the county court, took the name of the new county of Accomack, with which it was coterminous. Accomack Parish remained undivided for nearly a century, until, in 1762, St. George's Parish was formed out of the lower half of Accomack County, the remainder of the divided parish retaining its original name.¹⁷

A study of the early land grants has been made by two Eastern Shore residents, Mr. Ralph T. Whitelaw of Accomac and Miss Anne Floyd Upshur of Nassawadox, as a basis for a general history of this section of the state. These land grants, plotted chronologically on a map of the region, clearly reveal the trend of early settlement, thus indicating the probable location of the first church buildings.

These students conclude that the Dale's Gift settlement of 1614 was never more than a base camp for the men detailed to catch fish and make salt. They think that it must have been abandoned by 1619, when the old salt-works were reported to have gone to ruin, although it is true that unsuccessful attempts were later made to revive the salt-making project.¹⁸

They find that no permanent settlement resulted from this early camp, the logical location for which, they believe, was on the mainland adjacent to the original site of the salt-works on Smith Island. This belief is supported by Pory's statement that Governor Dale had bought land from the Indians, for the Company, at this place on the mainland shore.

The earliest permanent establishment on the Eastern Shore is believed to have been on Old Plantation Creek and traditionally gave this tidal waterway its historic name. This establishment, according to Whitelaw and Upshur, may have been on the land later patented by John Blower,¹⁹ just north of the mouth of this creek, or more probably, on land taken up on the south side of the creek by Sir Thomas Dale, at an unrecorded date, which may well have been prior to the first settlement at Accomack Creek. Dale's land was not patented until 1645, but the patent then issued to William Shrimpton, one of Lady Dale's executors, was based upon a bill of adventure granted to Sir Thomas as early as 1611. It seems possible, then, that Dale's seating of this land was contemporary with the camp at Dale's Gift, since Dale left the colony in 1616 and died three years later.

¹⁷ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, VII, 614.

¹⁸ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, L, 193.

¹⁹ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 13, 159.

Whatever the origin of this first establishment, it had none of the character of a town or village, and Whitelaw and Upshur feel that the above considerations point strongly to the early settlement at Accomack, on the north side of King's Creek, as the site of the first church on the Eastern Shore. Strong presumptive evidence of the existence of this pioneer church at Accomack is furnished by a court order of 8th September, 1634, condemning Joane Butler to be "drawen over the Kinges Creeke at the starne of a boate or Canno",²⁰ such sentences being generally carried out near the parish church and therefore constituting an almost infallible indication of its site.

It seems probable that this first church was built soon after the Reverend Francis Bolton's arrival on the Eastern Shore in 1623, although no church appears to be listed at Accomack in the Virginia Company's census of 1624.²¹ From the recently published researches of Mr. Henry C. Forman²² and the late Mr. Harold R. Shurtleff,²³ it is apparent that this pioneer church building could not have been of the "log cabin" construction that was typical of Virginia frontier habitations of later period. This early church was probably of the "cruck" type of construction outlined by Mr. Shurtleff, in which the walls were often of wattle, a fabric woven out of split saplings, carried by A-frames formed by "crucks" (crooks) of heavier timber, and made weathertight by cementing or "daubing" with clay.

That this church building stood within a log stockade, doubtless the same one that enclosed the entire settlement, is proved by an amusing reference to this stockade in an Accomack County court order of 19th February, 1634/5, which reads as follows: "John Waltham aged 24 ^{yr}, Randall Revell 21 yeeres & John Ford 25 yeeres or therabouts sworne and examined Say that they h[e]ard Henry Charelton say that if had had M^r Cotton w^{thout} the Church yeard he woulde have kickt him over the Pallyzados caling of him black cotted Raskoll. Upon the Complaynt of M^r Cotton agst the Syd [said] Charelton . . . it is ordered that the Syd Charelton shall for the Syd offense buyld a pare off Stocks and Sett in them three Severall Sabouth days in the tyme of Dyvine Servis and their aske M^r Cotton forgiveness."²⁴

It may have been that, at the time of this record, the original crude building had given place to a better church of hewn timber, but it is

²⁰ *Northampton County Orders, 1632-40*, I, 20.

²¹ Kingsbury, *Records of Virginia Company of London*, IV, 559.

²² Forman, *Jamestown and St. Mary's*, 30.

²³ Shurtleff, *Log Cabin Myth*, 30.

²⁴ *Northampton County Orders, 1632-40*, I, 45.

more probable that the old structure had survived until that date. This is at least hinted by a court order of 19th May, 1634, in which Daniel Cugley, for "miscaling . . . and striking of" William Berriman, was condemned to "be at the Charges of daubinge the Church as sone [soon] as the roafe is repaired".²⁵ This order not only suggests an effort to preserve an old structure, but, through the word "daubinge", may refer to the use of clay for making tight the wattle walls of the original building. It is true that the same word is often used, in specifications for the plastering of colonial churches, to mean the "scratch coat", but it is seldom used thus, alone, without a reference to the "plaistering" or "finish coat."

Prior to the formation of a regular vestry, the affairs of the Accomack plantation parish were administered by the newly organized justice-court, which began to function in 1632, two years before the Eastern Shore became Accomack County. An order of this court, dated 7th January, 1632/3, shows that some parish organization already existed, since it authorizes "the now church wardens" to distrain (or seize goods as security) for unpaid tithes due the minister.²⁶ The first parish vestry on the Eastern Shore was appointed by the Accomack County court on 14th September, 1635, in compliance with a decree of the General Court of the colony, requiring the vestry to build a "Parsonage House" on the parish glebe. The county court order states that there had been no formal vestry appointed prior to that time.²⁷

This ancient glebe has not been exactly located, but is known by Whitelaw and Upshur to have been on the bay shore, about a mile north of the creek, judging from boundary references in old deeds, prior to the final sale of this property by the parish in 1745.²⁸

The new vestry met, as directed by the court, "upon the feast day of St. Mychaell the Arch Angell being the 29th day of September", 1635, and provided for the construction of the parsonage. This was specified to be a wooden building, almost certainly of finished lumber, "forty feet long, eighteene feet wyde and nine feet to the wall plates", with two main rooms, a kitchen and a chamber. There was to be "a chimney at each end, and upon each side of the chimneys a small rome [room], the one for a study and the other for a buttery."²⁹

²⁵ *Northampton County Orders, 1632-40*, I, 28.

²⁶ *Northampton County Orders, 1632-40*, I, 4.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 58.

²⁸ *Northampton County Deeds, XVIII*, 328.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 63.

A vestry order of 22nd May, 1636, sets the clerk's salary and the fees for burials, which are required to be made in a graveyard plot set aside for the purpose, "due to the remote liveing of the members of this Parish from the Church." The order further requires that the parishioners "give notice unto the minister and provide Convenient means for his Coming there to bury the dead w^{ch} whosoever shall refuse such decent and Christianlike burial that then they are to stand to the Censure of this Vestry".³⁰ The same order enjoins the church wardens to provide "wth all the Conveniency that may be, a Pulpit Cloth, a cushon, a Bear (bier) and a Cheast", for the church's use, and imposes fines on absentees from any called meeting of the vestry.

The place selected for burial purposes was "on the land of Will^m Blowre [Blower], where Will^m Berriman liveth". Whitelaw and Upshur conclude that William Blower was the son and heir of John Blower, whose plantation was one of the earliest on the Eastern Shore, suggesting that he may have been one of the original Dale's Gift workers and the only one to remain near the spot as a settler. This plantation occupied the point on the north side of the mouth of Old Plantation Creek, and a burial ground there would have been convenient for access by boat from the contemporary settlement on both sides of Old Plantation Creek, as well as from the original parish glebe less than a mile north of the point.

Evidence that the construction of a new church was contemplated, soon after the date of this entry, may be found in a court order of 13th August, 1638, fining David Winley and Edward Game, for slandering Alexander Wignall, one hundred pounds of tobacco apiece, the fines to be applied "towards the building of a newe Church".³¹ That this new church was completed by 1641 is perhaps suggested by a court order dated the 2nd August, in that year. This order enforces an earlier requirement by the Governor and Council that all male inhabitants should carry loaded arms and ammunition when away from home, by condemning those caught without them to meet at "the pish Church of Ackowmacke" and clear the weeds from "about the Church" and the paths leading to it.³² Such an order for cleaning the churchyard was customarily issued by the vestry following the completion of a new church building, during whose construction the churchyard had been neglected.³³

³⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 73.

³¹ *Northampton County Orders, 1632-40*, I, 148.

³² *Northampton County Orders, 1640-45*, II, 88.

³³ See page 250.

Whitelaw and Upshur believe that this new church was the one traditionally located near the Fishing Point, as described in an early chronicle which has frequently been quoted, although its original source is never given and has not been discovered. Judging from its colonial wording and spelling, however, this much-quoted passage is authentic, even if somewhat garbled in quotation.

The chronicle states that this early church was built "neare the Fishing poynte"³⁴ and describes it as being "of insignificant dimension, constructed of roughly riled logs, cemented loosely with wattle; the whole enclosed by Pallysadoes for protection against the Indian tribes, an ever present menace to peace and safety".³⁵ It is evident from this description that this second church was as crude as the first one, and was also of the "cruck" type of construction and surrounded by a palisade for protection against the Indians.

The best evidence of the genuine character of the above chronicle is that none of the authors who had previously quoted it identified the Fishing Point mentioned with its historic location on Old Plantation Creek. The Fishing Point is believed to have received its name as the principal scene of fishing operations by the Dale's Gift colonists. It has been identified by Whitelaw and Upshur as the third point above the mouth of Old Plantation Creek, on its eastern side. Their identification is based on early deeds and land grants and is confirmed by the fact that this point is still called Hunt's Point, after Thomas Hunt, who patented the entire Fishing Point Neck in 1669.³⁶

The Fishing Point Church was traditionally the first one built on the Eastern Shore, and has therefore been assigned a construction date as early as 1623, by previous writers. From their studies of the earliest land patents, Whitelaw and Upshur have found that this church could not have been built as early as this, because during the first decade of permanent settlement on the Eastern Shore, from 1620 to 1630, there were not enough inhabitants on Old Plantation Creek for its support.

The truth of their conclusion is amply demonstrated by an order of the General Court of the colony, dated 13th October, 1627, forbidding settlement at Old Plantation Creek and Magothy Bay as "both inconvenient and dangerous" and expressing a desire to keep the colonists "seated closely together" and "rather . . . to endeavour

³⁴ Howard, *Colonial Churches of Virginia*, 99.

³⁵ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, V, 128.

³⁶ *Patent Book VI*, Vol. I, 256.

the full planting of the forest than any other place",³⁷ showing the complete lack of settlement near the Fishing Point site prior to this date.

Their study of the land grants reveals that this order was later ignored, when, instead of following the court's wishes, the settlers proceeded to take up all the remaining waterfront land. In the second decade of settlement, therefore, the tide of immigration flowed unrestrained from Accomack down the bay shore to Old Plantation Creek and around its head to its eastern bank and beyond, down to Magothy Bay. The resulting shift in the center of population produced a demand for a church at the Fishing Point, before the end of this second decade, and this accounts for its construction.

In conformity with the close association of church and court-house that was usual in early colonial times, the county courts were transferred to the new center of population, about the time that the new church was built. Beginning in 1640, these courts were held, at first occasionally and then regularly, at a tavern called the Point House, from its location near the Fishing Point. It is apparent that earlier courts had been held at the original Accomack settlement, beginning at the opening of the county records in 1632.

The rapid spread of population northward during the next two decades, from 1640 to 1660, culminating in the formation of the upper county in 1662, was followed by a corresponding shift in church and court locations. In 1649, courts were ordered to be held alternately at Old Plantation and Nuswattocks (later Hungars),³⁸ and in 1653, they were ordered to be held successively "at Cherriston [formerly Accomack] Creek, Hungars, and Occahannock."³⁹ It is evident from the latter order that the original Accomack Town at King's Creek had been revived, and, in 1664, the first court-house built for Northampton County was ordered to be erected "at Town Field . . . on the west side of a little gutt, emptying into King's Creek near the present city."⁴⁰

It will be shown later that the establishment of courts at Hungars and Occahannock was accompanied by the building of churches, and although the record is not equally clear in regard to Accomack, Whitelaw and Upshur believe that the usual association of church

³⁷ McIlwaine, *Minutes of Council and General Court*, 156.

³⁸ *Northampton County Orders, Deeds, Wills, 1645-51*, III, 174.

³⁹ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, V, 37.

⁴⁰ *Northampton County Orders, 1657-64*, VIII, 191.

and court also took place at that place. This conclusion is supported by a court order of 28th April, 1663, notifying "the Gentlemen of the Vestry to meete at the towne Church" on the following Monday.⁴¹

Since no other town then existed on the Eastern Shore, this order can only refer to a church at the revived Accomack settlement, and this is confirmed by the fact that two vestrymen, John Waterson and Robert Warren, especially requested to attend the "towne Church" meeting, both seem to have lived on the east side of King's Creek, adjacent to Accomack. It is also substantiated by a patent of 1671 to William Waters for 700 acres "at a poynt of Land on the Southside of Kings Creek over against the Church point".⁴² Since earlier patents for the same land do not mention the Church Point, this clearly refers to a church existing at Accomack in 1671. This church was the third such building in the Lower Parish, and the second erected at Accomack.

The Lower Parish was much the smaller of the two parishes into which Northampton County had been divided in March, 1642/3, and the inability of its parishioners to finance the building of a new house of worship or to maintain a minister of their own seems to have prompted the petition presented to the Governor and Council on 21st April, 1691, praying that the two parishes be reunited under the name of Hungars.⁴³

The same financial difficulties had been experienced by the parishioners of Hungars, for the petition sets forth that "the said county is one of the smallest in this Colony, doth consist of a small number of Tythables, and is devided in two parishes, by reason whereof the Inhabitants of both parishes are soe burdened that they are not able decently to mainetaine a minister in each parish and therefore prayed the Said parishes might be Joyned in one and goe by the name of Hungars parish . . . Which parishes soe joyned will not only be Satisfactory to the Inhabitants but capable to build a decent church and mainetaine an able divine."

It is manifest that a new church for the Lower Parish was contemplated at the time this petition was made, for the will of Colonel John Stringer, dated 10th February, 1688/9, and proved in December of the same year, leaves "one thousand pounds of Tobacco (when the New Church is built and finished for this lower parish of North-

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, VIII, fol. 167.

⁴² *Patent Book VI*, Vol. 2, 404.

⁴³ *Northampton County Orders, Wills, 1689-98*, XVII, 10.

ampton County & for & towards the purchasing of the Lords prayer and tenn Comandm^{ts} to bee Sett Up in the Same)."⁴⁴ There is no doubt that this church was actually constructed, and its foundation, a part of which is still in evidence at its site, indicates that it was built of brick. It is believed to have been the building which survived the colonial era as the last Lower Church of Hungars Parish, and frequent references to it, under that title, are found in the colonial vestry book of the parish.

Judging from the financial stringency revealed in this petition, it seems probable that construction of the new church could not be financed until the union of the parishes took place and that it was the "decent church" whose erection was contemplated. It is therefore likely that it was not completed until two or three years after this union, or about 1692-3.

As in the case of several other colonial churches, no deed to the site of this last Lower Church was given until some time later, and even then the gift of the churchyard was only made as a reservation from the sale of the larger tract that included it.⁴⁵ The deed of sale is dated 30th May, 1698, and gives some interesting details of the old Church's site.

By this deed, William Willett conveys to William Baker six hundred acres of woodland, "bounded about partly on the west by old plantation creek, includinge the church or chapple neck thereon: And from an Oake att the Springe by the said church or chappell, Alonge the horse or footeway or path . . . and Runninge from the said Old Plantation Creeke Alonge the Northern Braunch of the Said church or chappell neck towards the head of the said Braunch . . . (Exceptinge out of the said p^rbargained p^rmises one Acre of Land whereon the aforesaid church or Chapell now stands to remain for that Use as long as the parish are minded to Continue the same)".⁴⁶

Although situated on Old Plantation Creek, the last Lower Church became known as the Magothy Bay Church, after the tidal estuary two or three miles to the east of its site. That this name was applied to the church in colonial times is established by a deed of 1737, from Major Guy to Benjamin Johnson, for 187½ acres of land "lying . . . near Maggoty Bay Church".⁴⁷ As suggested by the spelling em-

⁴⁴ *Northampton County Orders, Wills, 1689-98, XVII, 10.*

⁴⁵ See page 135.

⁴⁶ *Northampton County Deeds, Wills, 1692-1707, XVI, 198.*

⁴⁷ *Northampton County Deeds, XVIII, 111.*

ployed in this deed, the colonial pronunciation of the name was "Mag-gotty", and this is confirmed by a great variety of similar spellings in early land patents.

Like most of the other colonial churches in Virginia, the old Lower Church was abandoned by minister and congregation soon after the Revolutionary War, the General Assembly having suspended, at the very beginning of the country's struggle for independence, the parish levies formerly available for the churches' maintenance. The church was standing in 1819, when the revival of religion took place on the Eastern Shore, and Bishop Moore reported having preached there in 1821,⁴⁸ although it must have been in a very bad state of repair, after forty years of neglect.

The earliest proposal for the old building's restoration to service, at the first recorded meeting of the revived vestry of Hungars Parish, on 15th June, 1819, calls for subscriptions to "the repairs . . . of the Lower Church or to the building of a new church." The old church was finally adjudged to be beyond repair, for, six months later, the vestry appropriated \$300, from the annual rent of the Glebe, "to aid the building of the lower Church." It is significant of the spiritual apathy prevailing at that time that this appropriation had to be rescinded, less than a year later, "the people of the lower part of the parish not having accepted the appropriation or taken any measures in furtherance of that object."

The old church soon went completely to ruin and the vestry on the 10th May, 1824, authorized the sale of the walls and materials, the proceeds to go toward the building of a new Lower Church and "not to be appropriated for any other purpose whatsoever." In spite of this authorization, the ruins of the old church were not disposed of until September, 1826, when they were finally ordered sold at public auction. It is traditional that the bricks were used to build the brick gable-end of a wing added in 1828 to an adjacent farm house, which is still standing.

The site of Magothy Bay Church is still marked by descendants of the ancient sycamore trees customarily planted around all the oldest churchyards on the Accomack Peninsula. A large part of what appears to be the south foundation wall of the ancient building is clearly visible at the surface of the ground, but the location of the other walls can only be determined by excavation. The foundation has a thickness of twenty-eight inches, or three brick lengths, and

⁴⁸ Hawks, *Convention Journals of Diocese of Virginia*, I, 144.

is manifestly that of a brick church. A few modern tombstones remain at the site and the ancient spring, given as a boundary of the original churchyard, is still flowing. The site is just west of the Bayside Road and $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Cape Charles city.

The first mention of a church other than the two pioneer structures on Old Plantation and Accomack Creeks, in the Northampton records, is found in a series of references to "the Church at Nuswattocks", beginning with the year 1647. It is apparent from the records that the name Nuswattocks was applied to the entire region now known as Church Neck, lying between the present Nassawadox Creek on the north and Hungars Creek on the south.

These early references to a church at Nuswattocks are generally connected with disciplinary action by the county court for various offenses against morality, the offenders being required to do appropriate penance at the parish church during the regular Sunday services. The earliest of them, dated 20th February, 1646/7, records the punishment of Richard Buckland for having "scandalized & defamed Ann Smyth by wrighting and dropinge of a Libell", a scurrilous song, near her house. The court's verdict was that the culprit "shall the next sermon that is preached att Nuswattocks stand att the Church doore from the beginning of the first Lesson until the Second bee ended with a paper upon his back" upon which "shalbe written in Capitall Lines (Inimicus Libellus)" and there ask forgiveness of God and of the defamed Ann.⁴⁹

Equally appropriate penance was imposed on Robert Warder in the following year when, for getting drunk, he was required to stand at the door of Nuswattocks Church, during service, with "a quart Pot" tied about his neck.⁵⁰ A man and a woman, presented to the court for immorality in July, 1648, by Mr. Thomas Palmer, minister of the Upper Parish of Northampton, and its churchwardens, were condemned to stand for three Sundays "in the pish church of Nuswattocks, with each of them a white sheete on there shoulders and white wande in their hande", while the woman, for railing at the justices, was further ordered to be towed across Hungars Creek.⁵¹

Such references clearly indicate that a parish church had been constructed for the Upper Parish within five years after its formation in 1642/3, and also suggest that the parish, like the church, had

⁴⁹ *Northampton County Deeds, Wills, 1645-51*, III, fol. 63.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, III, 127.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, III, fol. 149.

taken the name of the region and was then known as Nuswattocks. This is confirmed by a county court order of 20th July, 1648, that "the Inhabitants of the Upp pts of the pish of Nuswattocks shall wth in sixe weeks build a Bridge att Pocamoike Cr."⁵² Since the stream mentioned is a branch of Pongoteague Creek in what is now Accomack County, this record shows that the Upper Parish was considered as extending to the northerly limit of settlement.

No date of construction is recorded for Nuswattocks Church, but it must have been the building mentioned in "a bargain of worke for building construction", later described as "the church worke", made in 1647 between Michael Ricketts and John Major, known residents of this section.⁵³

There is a strong tradition, backed by ample documentary evidence, that this church was located at Pear Plain Farm, on the west bank of a small creek opening into the north side of Hungars Creek, about two and a half miles above its mouth. The reputed site of the old building is still visible at the top of the creek bank, which is leveled off at this point. Alongside the church site, on the sloping bank of the creek, stands one of the large old sycamore trees always associated with the earliest churchyards on the Eastern Shore.

The Northampton County records show that it was in the house of the tavern-keeper Walter Williams "att Nuswattocks" that the earliest justice courts were held for the upper parts of the county, alternately with the courts held at Old Plantation Creek for the lower parts.⁵⁴ The location of this tavern-court-house is definitely linked with that of the church at Nuswattocks by a mortgage of December, 1652, covering Williams' "nowe dwelling house & plantation . . . scituate neere unto the Church of the midle pish [parish]."⁵⁵

That the middle parish mentioned was Nuswattocks is evident from the fact that a third parish, known as Occahannock, was created in Northampton County in that year. Since the new organization was the uppermost parish in the county, Nuswattocks became the middle one and remained so until the new parish was cut off with Accomack County, ten years later.

Through the research of Mr. Ralph T. Whitelaw, confirmation of the traditional location of Nuswattocks Church on Pear Plain Farm

⁵² *Ibid.*, III, fol. 149.

⁵³ *Northampton County Deeds, Wills, 1645-51*, III, 150.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, III, 127.

⁵⁵ *Northampton County Deeds, Wills, 1651-54*, IV, 110.

is furnished by land grants and deeds showing the original ownership of this plantation, now owned and occupied by Mr. Richard Floyd.

A grant of 1250 acres on the north side of Hungars Creek was made in 1638 to Thomas Burbage, but others seem to have taken advantage of his non-residence to re-patent parts of the same tract. Among these was Francis Martyn, who patented 250 acres of Burbage's land in 1640 and assigned his patent in 1648 to Walter Williams.⁵⁶

In 1652 Williams sold 50 acres of the tract patented by Martyn. The land sold was bounded "on the one side with that Creeke that runs from Mr. Charlton's plantacon to the Church (Comonly called the Branch of Nuswattox Creeke) & on the other side with plantacon of Walter Williams".⁵⁷ From a deed to a part of Charlton's land this creek can be identified as Little Nuswattocks, now Westerhouse Creek, which is in line with the creek bordering Pear Plain Farm and hence points directly to the traditional site of old Nuswattocks Church.

In further confirmation of the location of Nuswattocks Church at the Pear Plain site, it is significant that the woman already mentioned as being presented for immorality in 1648 was punished by being towed on Hungars Creek from the land of Francis Martyn to that of Mr. Palmer, the minister, such sentences being regularly carried out near the parish church.⁵⁸

The principal settlement in the neck called Nuswattocks was not situated on the creek of that name, but on one of the main branches of Hungars Creek. As a result, within less than a dozen years after the establishment of the Upper Parish, this settlement became known as Hungars. This is apparent from orders showing that a county court, recorded as "holden at Hungars in Northampton county 28th of September, 1653", was actually held at the tavern of Walter Williams in what had formerly been Nuswattocks.⁵⁹ It is also evident that the change of name from Nuswattocks to Hungars was later extended to both the parish and its church.

Although the Upper Parish had ceased to be called Nuswattocks by 1651, even before the settlement of that name had become known as Hungars,⁶⁰ no official recognition of the name "Hungars Parish" ap-

⁵⁶ *Northampton County Deeds, Wills, 1651-54, IV, 112.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, 91.

⁵⁸ *Northampton County Deeds, Wills, 1645-51, III, fol. 149.*

⁵⁹ *Northampton County Deeds, Wills, 1651-54, IV, fols. 200, 202.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, IV, fol. 37.

pears in the county records until 1661, when a court order of 29th November grants the petition of "the Church Wardens of Hungars Parrish" that the sheriff might be authorized to assist the church officers in collecting the parish levy.⁶¹

Even after such official acceptance of the change in parish title, the name "Nuswattocks Parish" appears once more in a curious record of 28th April, 1663. On this date, the Northampton county court ordered that "whereas John Stockley hath in a turbulent manner disturbed and abused the vestry of Hungars & Nuswattocks parish . . . calling them an illegal Vestry . . . and . . . not prooveing his assertion either by Law or otherwise", he was "to make his public Recantation in the Church for his sd offense in w^{ch} place it was committed (the next time Mr Teackle shall their preach) in the presence of the then Auditors".⁶²

The case of John Stockley appears to represent a final protest against the change of parish name from Nuswattocks to Hungars. Depositions in the case show that Stockley's complaint was that "the Vestry of Hungars Parish was an illegal vestry because they were not elected by the Consent of the whole parish", and he seems to have taken the stand that the vestry did not represent those who still felt that the parish was Nuswattocks, not Hungars.

In confirmation of this hypothesis, it is significant that, in the original order of 28th April, 1663, the words "& Nuswattocks" were inserted, in the same hand, after the name "Hungars", as if to satisfy the complainant by showing that the parish represented by this vestry was not only Hungars but Nuswattocks. It is clear that this order involves only one vestry, always identified as that of Hungars Parish, with the single exception noted. As this court was held at Hungars, formerly Nuswattocks, and the church there must have been the one mentioned, this record identifies the former Nuswattocks Church as the first church of Hungars Parish.

The identity of Nuswattocks Church with the first Hungars Church is further confirmed by an assignment made by Richard Allen to John Hagamond and family, on 7th November, 1665, of "my pew w^{ch} I built in Hungars Church", on the occasion of Allen's leaving the parish.⁶³ It is likely that this was a "great pew", built in the chancel as a privilege granted by the vestry.

⁶¹ *Northampton County Orders, 1657-64, VIII, fol. 115.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, VIII, fol. 115.

⁶³ *Northampton County Deeds, Wills, 1657-66, VIII, 119.*

The significance of this record lies in the fact that Walter Williams' plantation, near which Nuswattocks Church stood, was recovered at his death by the heirs of Thomas Burbage, the original patentee, and by them sold to Allen, who resold to Hagamond. Since it would have been in accordance with colonial custom for Allen to build a pew in the church adjoining his land, his statement affords presumptive evidence that Nuswattocks Church had become the first Hungars Church by the date of this record.

The earliest published mention of the name Hungars appears to be in the census of 1625, which records that there had been granted to "Sir George Yeardley at Hunger's 3700 acres of land by order of court".⁶⁴ This grant confirms the previous gift of this land to Yeardley, then governor of Virginia, by Debedeavon, "the Laughing King of Accomack", upon the occasion of Yeardley's visit to the Eastern Shore in 1621. This munificent gift, as recorded at Northampton court-house in 1668, conveyed to Yeardley all of Hungars Neck, described as "that neck of land from Wissaponson Creek to Hungars Creek."⁶⁵ The site of Hungars plantation house is still marked by several tombstones of the Yeardley family. Wissaponson Creek is now called "the Gulf."

Definite evidence that the name Hungars is of Indian origin is found in a later patent of 1638, confirming the title of Sir George's son Argoll Yeardley to Hungars Neck, described as being "on the river of Hungars, soe called by the Indians".⁶⁶ The same patent proves that this name is not properly a possessive form, and this is confirmed by other records, consistently referring to both creek and parish as "of Hungars".

A historic bequest to Hungars Parish, although the latter is not mentioned by name, is found in the will of Stephen Charlton of Nuswattocks, dated 28th October, 1654, which leaves his valuable 1500-acre farm on Church Neck to the parish, as a glebe for the support of its rector. Under this will, the farm was left to Charlton's daughter Bridget and, upon her death without issue, was to revert to the use of the minister of the parish, provided "that hee preach once ev'ry Lords daye; and oftner if required", and that there should be no "vacancye of such a Minister in this parrish by the space of six moneths." Charlton also bequeathed 1000 pounds of tobacco for the repair of the parish church.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Brown, *First Republic in America*, 625.

⁶⁵ *Northampton County Orders, 1664-74*, X, 49.

⁶⁶ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I, 96.

⁶⁷ *Northampton County Deeds, Wills, 1654-55*, V. 56.



Glebe house of Hungars Parish.



Parish Church of St George, Accomack, Virginia

PLATE 77

Pongoteague Church (St. George's Church) in 1819.

Bridget Charlton married young and lived to a ripe old age, but died childless in 1704, half a century after the date of her father's will.⁶⁸ The farm then passed to the parish and served as its glebe for nearly a century and a half, until it was finally lost to the church in 1853 by confiscation, through what can only be regarded as a grave miscarriage of justice. The early eighteenth-century glebe house is still in existence and it is believed that part of Charlton's house of 1654 is incorporated in its structure.⁶⁹

No information as to the architectural design of the first Hungars Church has come down to us, but it was doubtless of the simplest type of frame construction, like the building which succeeded it, whose specification reveals that it did not even have a brick foundation. The same specification furnishes proof that the first church was of sawn or hewn lumber, since the plank ceiling of this earlier building was still sound enough to be used in the later structure.⁷⁰

Perhaps because of the uneven topography and limited space available at Pear Plain, a better site was found for the second Hungars Church, although, in accordance with colonial custom, no deed to it was secured until after its construction had been started. This deed, dated 13th December, 1680, records the gift by Major William Spencer to the parish of Hungars of "That ground whereon the frame of a Church now standeth And one Acre of ground about it for a Church yard or buriall place . . . upon the head branch of the . . . Creeke of Hungars in a ffeild comonly knowne by the name of Smith's ffeild."⁷¹

The site chosen was beside the colonial highway, a quarter mile east of the village, on the tract of level ground known as Smith's Field, which had traditionally been used as a race course prior to this date. The adjacent Church Creek and the Church Neck below the site were both named from their association with this ancient building.

The contract for construction of the second Hungars Church was recorded at Accomack court-house, probably because the builder, Simon Thomas, was a resident of that county. His agreement with the vestry of Hungars Parish, dated 9th July, 1679, includes a specification for the new church, which shows that it was a small building, only forty feet by twenty-five feet, inside, with walls ten feet high to the plates. It was built of sawn or hewn lumber and the entire framing was

⁶⁸ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 256.

⁶⁹ *Virginia Historical Magazine*, XLVI, 220.

⁷⁰ *Accomack County Wills, Deeds, Orders, 1678-82*, XVII, 240.

⁷¹ *Northampton County Deeds, Wills, 1680-92*, XIV, 1.

of oak timbers, set on locust-wood blocks, instead of on the usual brick foundation. The exterior, including the top, was covered with planks, laid flush on the walls and overlapped on the roof, the upper edges of the roof planks being let into the rafters, "so that the same shall be close and tight." The planks forming the ceiling of the earlier church of Hungars Parish were to be used again and laid upon arches underneath the roof of the new building.⁷²

It was further agreed that the parish was to furnish sufficient plank for the completion of this ceiling, as well as for the covering of walls and roof, and to supply the necessary nails. The parish was also to provide "Dyet" or subsistence for the builder and his workmen, and transportation for the timbers used in building the church. On his part, the builder agreed not to undertake any more work elsewhere or to leave the job "except upon some great occasion for a week or two at most." The price to be paid upon completion of the church was only ten thousand pounds of tobacco, but the financial difficulties which soon afterward led to union of the two Northampton parishes prevented prompt payment, and the contractor, on the 12th, July, 1681, was forced to sue the churchwardens, praying to be released from his contract. Stoppage of the work was ordered by the governor, pending the outcome of this appeal, which was finally referred to him for settlement, with what result is not told.

It seems probable that the parish's financial difficulties were aggravated, if not largely caused, by a disagreement between the churchwardens and the congregation, which culminated in a suit brought by Captain John Custis, in behalf of the parishioners of Hungars, on 29th May, 1683.

On this date, the churchwardens were summoned before the General Court, "for continuing Church Wardens beyond the time limited by the Canons and for removing the Church without the consent of the parish." This suit was likewise referred to the Governor, as the "only head of the Church and therefore sole judge in all Ecclesiastical parochial Affairs", but his decision seems to have been unrecorded.⁷³ Whatever the outcome, it is a matter of record that the contractor finished the church and died a few years later without having been paid in full by the parish vestry.

A deposition recorded at Eastville court-house establishes the date at which construction of the second Hungars Church was begun, and

⁷² *Accomack County Wills, Deeds, Orders*, 1678-82, XVII, 240.

⁷³ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council*, I, 496.

illustrates the prevalence of barter in early colonial transactions. This deposition, by the same Simon Thomas, carpenter, and dated 29th August, 1681, relates that in September, 1680, "at the raising of the new Church in Major Spencer's field, M^r John Custis Jun^r came thither and spake to me . . . to make him a pew in the said New Church telling me hee would give me a hh. [hogshead] of tobacco to build him the said Pew, and I made answer . . . that I would rather take creatures [livestock] and M^r John Custis made answer . . . he would give creatures to choose. And hee did desire to have the first Pew that was built in the sd. Church and did very much approve the worke and the place for the Church . . . and bad me . . . to send to his house and hee would give me thirty to forty gallons of Cyder to drinke the next day." Simon Thomas could not write his name, but he was a draftsman, for his mark or "signum" is a creditable sketch of a carpenter's square.⁷⁴

The reference to "Major Spencer's field" definitely identifies the church under construction as the second Hungars Church, and "the place for the Church" alludes to its new site. The purchaser of the pew was Captain John Custis, Junior, who lived only four miles due south of the new church, at Wilsonia, where his tomb is still visible. He was the son of the emigrant ancestor of that family, Major General John Custis of Arlington, and the father of Major John Custis, also of Arlington, who married Frances Parke. It is significant that the date given for the "raising" or erection of the frame of this church is consistent with that of Major Spencer's deed to the churchyard, "whereon the frame of a Church" was said to be standing in December, 1680.

The fact that the second Hungars Church was built on a different site from that of its predecessor, the first church of that name, is confirmed by another deposition, recorded many years after, but dealing with the later building's erection. In this statement, dated 1st February, 1692/3, Capt. Isaac Foxcroft, who had been for more than thirty years a vestryman, certifies that "on removinge of Hungars Church" (i. e., to a new site) Colonel William Kendall gave one thousand pounds of tobacco and was the only contributor. In return for his gift, the vestry, in assigning pews in the new church, awarded Kendall the "uppermost pew on the East End over against the chancel", despite the fact that he lived in the Lower Parish and that his son already had a pew in Hungars Church, as one of its parishioners.⁷⁵ It is noteworthy

⁷⁴ *Northampton County Orders, 1678-83, XIII, 186.*

⁷⁵ *Northampton County Orders, Wills, 1689-98, XVII, 250.*

that Captain Foxcroft was the husband of Bridget Charlton.⁷⁶

Ten years after the completion of the second Hungars Church, the two parishes of Northampton County were united as Hungars Parish, of which Hungars became the Upper Church. This name was chosen for the new parish so as not to invalidate the Charlton bequest of a glebe to the original Hungars Parish.⁷⁷ In this Upper Church was interred the Reverend Patrick Falconer, rector of Hungars from 1712 until his death in 1718. His verbal will is still on record and, besides giving one year's rent to two of his tenants, remits all the indebtedness of eight of his debtors and leaves five hundredweight of tobacco to each poor person then maintained by the parish. The record states that "his desire was to be buried in Hungars Church just before the pulpit."⁷⁸

Definite evidence of the replacement of the small frame church on Smith's Field by the present large church of the parish is found in the will of Thomas Preeson, dated 8th April, 1756, and proved 9th January, 1759/60. This will reads: "Whereas I have conveyed to me by the Church Wardens of the Parish of Hungars . . . (on consideration of my having conveyed to the said Church Wardens . . . for the Use of the said Parish forever One Acre of Land whereon the New Church now stands upon Hungars Creek) . . . one pew in the said Church marked T. P. 1751."⁷⁹ It appears from this will that a third church had been built for Hungars Parish, which was still a new church in 1756, and a record of 1742 shows that it was probably completed in that year.

This record is found in the minutes of the House of Burgesses for 19th May, 1742, and reads: "Resolved, that the Complaint from the Inhabitants of Hungar's Parish, in Northampton County, against the vestry of the said Parish, concerning the Disposal of the Pews in the new Church, be Rejected."⁸⁰ Since the first concern of a colonial vestry, upon the completion of a new church, was the assignment of pews to the congregation, this record constitutes strong evidence that the third Hungars Church was placed in service in 1742.

The transaction mentioned in the above will is recorded in a deed acknowledged the 14th June, 1752, by which Thomas Preeson, "for and in consideration of a Pew in the brick church called Hungars

⁷⁶ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 256.

⁷⁷ *Northampton County Orders, Wills*, 1689-98, XVII, 250.

⁷⁸ *Northampton County Wills, Deeds*, 1711-18, XXI-R, 159.

⁷⁹ *Northampton County Wills, Inventories*, 1754-60, XXIX-R, 394.

⁸⁰ McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses*, 1742-49, 29.

Church . . . marked T. P. 1751, assigned to him as his proper Pew", conveys to the churchwardens of the parish of Hungars "One Acre of Land . . . whereon Hungars Church now doth stand, and adjoining to an Acre of land formerly given by William Spencer . . . deceased." These two acres are described as being bounded on three sides by rows of sycamore trees, extending twenty poles from east to west and sixteen poles from north to south, which, at $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet to the pole would enclose slightly more than the area mentioned.⁸¹

This deed shows that the third Hungars Church was a brick building, and this fact, together with the details given of its site, identifies it as the present church of the parish. From the description in the deed, it is evident that the existing Hungars Church occupies the eastern half of a two-acre churchyard, the other half of which was formerly the site of the second church of that name. A dozen veteran sycamore trees, of unusual size, still mark three sides of the lot, and the remains of the kiln in which the bricks for the present building were burned are in evidence at the edge of the field east of the church. Traces of the colonial highway north of the churchyard show that it must have passed close to the earlier church's site.

As built in 1751, the third Hungars Church was the longest and next to the largest colonial church of rectangular form of whose completion there is any record in Virginia, being ninety feet by forty feet, inside, with walls two feet in thickness. It is traditional that its furnishings in colonial times were extremely rich, the chancel being hung with dark crimson velvet draperies of superb quality, edged with bullion gold braid, all imported from England.⁸² It is also traditional that Hungars Church had a fine pipe organ, the first in America, but this claim to priority cannot be substantiated, since an organ was installed in at least one other colonial church in Virginia at an earlier date.⁸³ It is also obvious that there are no grounds for belief in another tradition, identifying the furnishings of Hungars Church as gifts from Queen Anne,⁸⁴ since she died in 1714, twenty-eight years before this church was built.

The only surviving colonial vestry book of Hungars Parish, extending from 1759 to 1782, furnishes very little information regarding the parish churches, but their later history is given in detail by the modern

⁸¹ *Northampton County Deeds, 1750-63, XIX, 103*

⁸² Howard, *Colonial Churches of Virginia*, 109

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 110. See page 251, this volume.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 109.

vestry record, which extends almost unbroken from 1819 until the present day. The lapse of thirty-seven years, from 1782 to 1819, between the two vestry books, coincides with the period of general abandonment of colonial church buildings in Virginia, following the Revolutionary War and the disestablishment of the Episcopal Church.

By the close of this period, the old church had been completely stripped of its rich furnishings and never regained its colonial splendor. Remains of the pipe organ are reported by Bishop Meade to have survived until 1809,⁸⁵ its lead pipes having been ruthlessly broken up to furnish sinkers for fishing nets. The velvet hangings were cut to pieces by passing vandals, and even the fragments which were saved have since disappeared.⁸⁶ Only the linen altar cloth, upon which is worked in eyelet needlework the date "1749", and the silver communion service given to "the Upper Church of Hungars Parish" in 1742, by John Custis of Arlington, still remain, out of all Hungars' colonial treasures. A similar communion set, given by the same donor to the Lower Church in 1741, and a silver plate presented by Governor Nicholson, about 1692, are still in use at Christ Church, Eastville.

Hungars Church was restored to service in 1819, the old building having been repaired at a cost of \$1400, and was consecrated by Bishop Moore in May, 1821. The roof was shingled in 1837, and seats were built under the west gallery for the accommodation of colored people. In the year 1840, the congregation yielded to the spirit of change rampant at that period,⁸⁷ and destroyed most of the remaining colonial features of the church's interior. The original center aisle was replaced by two side aisles, and the paneled box pews, which were large and nearly square, with narrow seats on three sides, were torn out and modern pews installed instead. The high colonial pulpit, which stood at the north side of the church, near the side door, was moved to the chancel, from which it has since disappeared, and the wooden floor of the pews was extended over the chancel and the former center aisle.⁸⁸

By the end of 1850, Hungars Church was declared unsafe and a fund was started for rebuilding it. In March, 1851, the vestry resolved that the old church be taken down and that a new one be erected on the same site, using the materials in the old building, as far as might be considered sound and suitable. Bids for the new church's construction

⁸⁵ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 258.

⁸⁶ Howard, *Colonial Churches of Virginia*, 109.

⁸⁷ *William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XIX, 180, 341.

⁸⁸ Howard, *Colonial Churches of Virginia*, 109.

were called for, but fortunately, an alternative proposal for the old church's repair was accepted instead.

This proposal, by Thomas H. Stevenson of Snow Hill, Maryland, involved the taking down of the west gable, which was cracked and out of line, and of the side walls back to the first window on each side, and then building a new west end with the old bricks. The work was carried out on this basis and completed on the 23rd October, 1851, shortening the building to its present inside length of seventy feet.

The Maryland contractor's proposal was the means of saving the old church, as a priceless relic of colonial times, and he deserves great credit for its faithful performance, since it is evident that the altered building was "thoroughly and substantially repaired", as reported to the vestry by its building committee. Evidence that the contractor preferred doing an honest job to making a profit has only recently come to light, upon the renewal of the roof installed in 1851. This evidence is a signed statement by the contractor, inscribed on a shingle, and is to the effect that he had done the work on Hungars Church in 1851 for \$1500 and had "sunk a hundred dollars" in doing it. The brickwork of the rebuilt west gable is the product of a master builder, as it can scarcely be distinguished from that of the original walls, while the care taken in preserving and installing the colonial rubbed brick arches, with their fluted brick-tile keys, over the rebuilt doorways and windows, merits the highest praise.

From a study of the brickwork of the present Hungars Church and the record of previous changes in its arrangement, it is manifest that the original building had a central doorway in each of the north and the south sides and only one main entrance at the west end, instead of two, as at present. There were four windows in each of the sides and two in the east end, as at present. In the rebuilding, the side doorways were closed up and replaced by the two windows eliminated in shortening the walls. There is evidence that the original ceiling was of barrel type and was replaced by a flat one during the church's reconstruction. Two massive girders, extending the full length of the building, are still supported by the original fluted columns of solid heart pine and there is also a separate system of transverse beams above these girders. The original doors, window sash and casings appear to have been retained throughout. The present altar canopy is so out of keeping with the conventional arrangement of a colonial church that it is believed to have been added during the remodelling of 1840 or at an even later date.

Its sides are said to have been closed in, to form a small vesting room, never found in a colonial church.

Although the territory later included in the present county of Accomack had been erected into the parish of Ocquhanock in 1652, there is no evidence in the county records that a parish was actually organized in this section until some time after the county's creation in 1662. It was probably for this reason that this parish, when it finally was organized, assumed the name of the new county rather than the title assigned by the earlier enactment.

Early records in the present Accomack County's archives prove that two churches already existed in this county at the time of its formation. These churches, apparently the fourth and fifth to be built on the Eastern Shore, were known as Nandue Church and Occahannock Church and have not been considered as church buildings by previous historians, most of whom do not mention them at all.

In the first record found, dated 17th July, 1663, Murrim (Miriam?) Cornelius, having been presented to the court for slander, was ordered to "make her Contrition for the sd offense by acknowledgment in open Court and the next Saboth at Occahannock Church & the Sunday after at Nandue Church".⁸⁹ This record is confirmed by a later one, ordering Mary White to make a similar appearance "once in open Court and once at either Church in this county".⁹⁰

Although at least one colonial court record mentions "the Church" in referring to religious services held for an early parish in a private house, the reference is to the services and not to the house. This is manifest from the fact that this order concerns "the removal of the Church" (i.e., these services) from this private house to another one.⁹¹ There seems to be no precedent for interpreting such explicit references to Nandue Church and Occahannock Church as merely involving services held in some house. These were assuredly church buildings, then, even though probably of the simplest character.

An earlier court record of 28th March, 1653, imposes punishment on two more gossips, Joan Pettyjohn having to stand "att the church dore (during the tyme the psalme is singeing) wth a gagge in her mouth", while Genefera Jones was to be "towed over the creek at Nandue: ag^t M^{rs} West her landinge place from the Indyan pointe", as a penalty for her contemptuous bearing and neglect to make her

⁸⁹ *Accomack County Deeds, Wills, Orders, 1663-66*, I, 18.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 30.

⁹¹ See page 59.

acknowledgment in church.⁹² The location of the towing punishment identifies the church involved as Nandue Church and points to a probable site for it near the present Cedar View Wharf on the east side of Nandua Creek. This was formerly the plantation of Mrs. Anthony West, a widow who married Stephen Charlton, donor of Hungars Glebe, and was again widowed within a year. The date of this entry suggests that Nandue Church was built as a result of the creation of Ocquanock Parish in 1652.

A probable date for the construction of Occahannock Church is afforded by a county court order of 7th May, 1665, selecting Occahannock Creek as the place for a public market, sheriff's and clerk's offices, etc., and "to build a Church (or meeteing howse)."⁹³ The site chosen was the land of Richard Kellum, situated about where the present Bayside Road crosses Occahannock Creek on the way to Belle Haven.

The records show that this project was never carried out as ordered, but it is evident that a church was built soon afterward, which is believed to have stood on the north side of the creek, about a mile above its mouth, on the land of Colonel Edmund Scarburgh, at a point still known by older residents as Church Point.

It appears from the will of Richard Vaughan, proved 29th July, 1656, at a court held at his widow's house on Occahannock Creek, that a church in this section was contemplated as early as 1645, since this will, dated 23rd November in that year, bequeaths "one thousand weight of tobacco towarde the buildinge a howse for gods service".⁹⁴ It seems likely that this bequest was intended as a contribution toward the building of Nuswattocks Church in 1647. Since it did not become available until 1656, it is perhaps more probable that it was applied on the cost of the church then built at Occahannock, which stood near Vaughan's house.

Both of these early Accomack County churches were apparently served by the same minister, but he does not seem to have continued his ministry for very long after the new county's formation. The two church buildings must have been of a temporary character, since an Accomack County court order of 17th January, 1666/7, indicates that no church was then in service in this region and the parish was not then fully organized, although the records show that a vestry had been in existence in 1663 for what soon became known as Accomack Parish.

⁹² *Northampton County Deeds, Wills, 1651-54, IV, 170.*

⁹³ *Northampton County Deeds, Wills, 1654-55, V, 133.*

⁹⁴ *Northampton County Deeds, Wills, 1654-55, V, 102.*

This order requires "that Samuell Jones, Reader of this parish give notice every Sabboth day betweene this and the 17th of next moneth for the parishon⁹⁵ to meet at the house of Mr Tho: fflowke on the 17th day of ffebruary next where the said Samuell Jones is to read, and that they choose a vestry and Church wardens being according to Act of Assembly".⁹⁵ The fact that weekly services were thus being held by a reader in a private house shows that Accomack Parish had neither minister nor church, and the announced election further indicates that it had neither vestry nor churchwardens. The act of assembly mentioned appears to be the enactment of March, 1661/2, requiring a vestry of "twelve of the most able men of each parish" to be chosen and two churchwardens to be appointed from their number.⁹⁶ It is apparent from the above that the pioneer churches at Nandue and Occahannock had completely passed away, having been of the flimsiest type of construction, most probably, in the first place.

The only surviving colonial church in Accomack County stands near the present town of Pungoteague, at the head of the creek of that name and about seven miles north of the county's lower boundary. This ancient building was generally known in colonial times as Pongoteague Church, but has become known as St. George's Church, through its modern use as the parish church of St. George's Parish. It has long been credited with a construction date between 1652 and 1660, but the grounds upon which such a date is based will not bear close scrutiny. Bishop Meade, writing in 1857, says that "there is reason to believe that the church at Pongoteague was built before the division of the Eastern Shore into two counties", but, in support of this assertion, he makes only a vague reference to "a record in the clerk's office at Northampton", probably the Vaughan will, proved in 1656, which is inconclusive.⁹⁷

A date of erection "somewhere about 1656" has been generally accepted for old Pongoteague Church, on the strength of a published claim that the Reverend Thomas Teackle was its first rector and preached there for forty years, dying in 1696.⁹⁸ This claim is based on the undeniable fact that, in the Northampton County records, Mr. Teackle is frequently mentioned as "Minister of the Upper Parish", but it is equally indisputable that the Upper Parish of Northampton

⁹⁵ *Accomack County Wills, Deeds, Orders, 1660-70*, fol. 14.

⁹⁶ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 44.

⁹⁷ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 264.

⁹⁸ *Colonial Churches of Virginia*, 94.

was Hungars Parish, not Accomack, and that Mr. Teackle was not the first rector of either parish, although he appears to have served both, in that capacity, at various times. Nothing can therefore be deduced, as to the age of Pongoteague Church, from the facts of Mr. Teackle's life, although he lived near the old church and often filled its pulpit.

The court record of 1666/7, already quoted, is conclusive proof that Pongoteague Church could not have been constructed prior to that date. It therefore seems probable that it was the building mentioned in a later Accomack County court order, which shows that a church for the new parish had been started soon after its organization in the above year, but still remained unfinished in 1676. This entry, dated 12th January, 1675/6, records the petition of the parishioners of Accomack Parish, showing that they had "very lately contributed to the Utmost of their abilities for the building of a Church w^{ch} yet Standeth unfinished, for want whereof it will in a very Short time fall to utter ruine, and as if it were an easy thing to build Churches the Vestrey are endeavouring to Sett a far greater tax upon y^r Peticoners for the building of another Church . . . Contrary both to Law & reason, at least untill the first be finished and our abillities greater".⁹⁹ The two churches mentioned in this order must have been the ones known to have been built at Pongoteague and Assawaman, since the other colonial churches in Accomack County were of later origin.

The completion of the church at Pungoteague soon after the date of the above petition is established by a deposition of May, 1678, by Robert Watson, in which he mentions "being at Pungoteag Church about Shrove Tuesday in the year 1677" (1678).¹⁰⁰ The first minister of this church appears to have been Henry Parke, who, in August, 1678, presented in court a bill for a funeral sermon that he had preached¹⁰¹ and, in a deposition made two months later, identified himself as "Henry Parke Minister of Accomack Parish aged thirty three yeares."¹⁰² A court record of 1687 reveals that he died in or before that year.¹⁰³

The gift of a site for this church is apparently represented by the exception of "two acres formerly given to the church", in a deed of 1679, from Morgan and Dorothy Thomas to William Stevens and

⁹⁹ *Accomack County Wills, Deeds, Orders*, 1673-76, 362.

¹⁰⁰ *Accomack County Deeds, Wills, Orders*, 1676-78, 149.

¹⁰¹ *Accomack County Deeds, Wills, Orders*, 1678-82, 8.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁰³ *Accomack County Deeds, Wills, Orders*, 1682-97, 105.

Henry Read, for land at Pongoteague.¹⁰⁴ Since the same land seems to have been bought from Ambrose and Comfort White, in the preceding year, the original donor of the church site remains unidentified.

Several significant items recently found by Whitelaw and Upshur, through their intensive search of the Accomack records, strongly suggest that the existing St. George's Church at Pungoteague is the second building on this site and was not built until about 1738. The first of these entries, dated 3rd October, 1738, admits to court record "An Assignment of all Tobacco &c to be levied for Building of Pongoteague Church from John Snead Gent to William Andrews Gent".¹⁰⁵

This assignment is recorded in the deed book for this year, in part as follows: "I John Snead . . . do hereby Assign to William Andrews all the Tobaccos hereafter for me to be levy'd by the vestry of Accomack parish for the building of the Church at Pongoteague and I hereby request the same shall become due and payable to the said William Andrews . . . and I further Acknowledge that . . . every Sum of money Tobacco and other things whatsoever by me found and Expended toward the building of the said Church are to me by the said Andrews fully satisfied".¹⁰⁶

The conclusion that the above records refer to the building of a second church at Pungoteague is supported by a petition of 2nd June, 1726, submitted to the House of Burgesses by "Henry Scarburgh and Edmund Scarburgh in behalf of themselves and the Inhabitants of the Parish of Accomack Complaining of the unjust and Arbitrary Proceedings of the present Vestry of the said Parish and that they refuse to repair the Mother Church with intent to induce a necessity of building a new Church and praying that the said Vestry be dissolved". The petition was rejected, but the House expressed the opinion "that the Vestry . . . Ought to make all necessary repairs to the Mother Church".¹⁰⁷

The "Mother Church" mentioned in this petition was clearly the parish church at Pungoteague, and the pressing need of repair or replacement, only fifty years after its construction, when taken in conjunction with the complaint of 1676 as to its ruinous condition while still unfinished, suggests that it was a frame building.

¹⁰⁴ *Accomack County Deeds, Wills, Orders, 1676-90, 175.*

¹⁰⁵ *Accomack County Deeds, 1737-44, 99.*

¹⁰⁶ *Accomack County Deeds, 1737-46, I, 63.*

¹⁰⁷ McIlwaine, *Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1712-26, 418.*

The whole record heavily discounts the probability of the original church's survival for two more centuries, through the most destructive sort of abuse, and accordingly strengthens the case for its having been replaced in 1738 by a new building. The documentary proof that the therefore seems as conclusive as that which we possess for the date of present St. George's Church at Pungoteague was actually built in 1738 erection of any colonial church building in the state.

It is evident from a sketch made in 1819 by a young rector of St. George's Parish, the Reverend James Wallis Eastburn, that the present Pongoteague Church, as originally built, was one of the quaintest and most interesting colonial church buildings in Virginia. This drawing was used as a frontispiece for a volume of the rector's poems, and the original is preserved in the parish house of St. James' Church at Accomack. Pongoteague Church was built in the form of a Latin cross and had a semicircular apse, with conical top, at the east end. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of its design was a hipped gambrel roof, ending in a gable in way of the apse. The two wings forming the transept were of equal length and the chancel and nave slightly longer, and this shape, in connection with that of the rounded apse, brought the old building the irreverent nickname of "The Ace of Clubs Church".¹⁰⁸

It is apparent from soundings made on the site that the church, as built, was about fifty-four feet, north and south, by sixty-nine feet, east and west, inside, exclusive of the apse. The nave was about twenty-four feet six inches long, and the chancel twenty-one feet, while all four arms of the cross had an inside width of twenty-one feet six inches, the apse being about six feet narrower. The walls were twenty-two inches thick, built of brick in perfect Flemish-bond pattern. The sketch of 1819 reveals that there was a window in each side of the chancel and transept wings, and it is probable that there were two in each side of the nave. There was a large central double window in the apse and an entrance doorway at each end of the transept and at the west end of the nave. The sketch indicates that these doorways were trimmed with plain circular arches, while the window tops were either square or finished with relieving arches.

Old Pongoteague Church, unlike most colonial churches, was not abandoned following the disestablishment of 1785, but remained in service until the War of 1812. Upon the general revival of religion on the Eastern Shore, in 1819, it was repaired and restored to use as an

¹⁰⁸ Taylor, *Episcopal Church on Eastern Shore*, 16.

Episcopal church,¹⁰⁹ and it was again thoroughly repaired, about 1858. During the Civil War, the old building was inexcusably desecrated, through use as an army stable by the Federal forces, and left in a badly wrecked condition.

Almost the only details of the old church's original interior arrangement that have been recorded are found in depositions made by old residents before the United States Court of Claims in 1905, in a suit to secure damages for this desecration by Federal troops. These show that the building had a pine floor, except in the aisles, which were paved with large square brick tiles. The pews were originally of the high box type, but had been cut down. They were made of pine, painted, and the high colonial pulpit was of mahogany; a hand-carved cornice is also mentioned. There was a gallery over each of the three doors, each gallery being supported by two molded columns. The various deponents agree that the floors, galleries and all other interior woodwork were torn out by the troops, leaving nothing but the roof and the bare brick walls. One of the wings was badly damaged by the removal of bricks to build a cook-house for the soldiers.¹¹⁰

The old church building stood a ruin for about a dozen years after the war, until it was rebuilt and again replaced in service, about the year 1880. By this time, the nave and chancel wings had become so ruinous that they were torn down and the bricks used to close the openings left in the transept walls, so that the church as it stands today is a plain rectangular building, retaining little of its original charm. A few of the large old sycamores associated with early Eastern Shore churchyards are still standing on the church property. The ancient communion silver of old Pongoteague Church is still in use there today. Both chalice and paten bear the blunt inscription: "This belongs to the Parish of Accomack" and have the London date-letter for 1734-5.

Construction of the new church proposed by the Accomack vestry in 1676, although probably delayed by the parishioners' protest, was not abandoned after that date. This is apparent from the fact that, in 1680, two different sites were offered by members of the same family "for the building of a Church for the northern precinct of Accomack Parish". The first site, offered by Samuel Taylor, Sr., was on Chincoteague Branch, near the bridge over that stream, while the second, promised by William Taylor, Sr., was "on the northern side of Assawaman branch and on the eastern side of the next small branch that

¹⁰⁹Hawks, *Convention Journals of Diocese of Virginia*, I, 142.

¹¹⁰*Records of Court of Claims*, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

leadeth from assawaman branch to Gingoteague". That the site accepted by the parish was the one offered by William Taylor is evident from his will, dated 21st September, 1686, and proved a year later, which bequeaths "a small parcel of land which I have [given] and do give to the parish for the use of a church".

The wording "for the use of a Church" instead of the usual phrase "where the Church now stands", seems to imply that no church had yet been built on the site thus given. This conclusion is supported by an order recorded as "Proclaimed att the Churches" by the clerk of Accomack Parish, in October, 1692, and listing these churches as at Onancock and Pongoteague, without mention of a church at Assawaman.

The church, which was undoubtedly built on the site thus given to the parish, may have been placed in service soon after the date last mentioned, or in 1693-4. It was first called Occocomson Church, after the region in which it stood, and later became known as Assawaman Church, from the creek near its site.

Due to its northerly location, Assawaman Church was left in what remained of Accomack Parish after the cutting-off of St. George's Parish in 1762. A letter written by Edward Wharton Taylor, great-great-grandson of William Taylor, furnishes documentary evidence that Assawaman Church continued in service for a quarter century after the Revolutionary War, was then employed as a school, and became a total ruin about 1830. In this letter, dated 11th April, 1890, Mr. Taylor states that he was born in 1803, was christened in old Assawaman Church, went to school in it, and finally saw it fall down, sixty years before he wrote this letter.¹¹¹

The site given by William Taylor, prior to 1686, is often mentioned in family documents as "the church acre". As recently as 1924, the ancient churchyard was still marked by aged sycamore trees, standing on a little hill overlooking an old millpond formed by damming the headwaters of Assawaman Creek.¹¹² This millpond has since filled up and the sycamores have vanished. The site is now a plowed field, filled with broken colonial brick, although it seems likely that the massive footings of the old church's walls are still in place beneath the ground.

A valued relic of this ancient building is still owned by its modern successor, Emmanuel Church at Jenkinsbridge. This is a silver communion cup, inscribed: "For the use of the Parish Church of Acco-

¹¹¹ Taylor, letter and will in possession of Mrs. O. R. Fletcher, Sanford, Va.

¹¹² Taylor, *Episcopal Church on Eastern Shore*, 23.

mack at Assuaman". It is believed to have been purchased with money left to the parish by Colonel George Douglass in 1748, and bears the London date-letter of 1749-50. This cup was found, long after the old church had gone to ruin, in a field on Colonel Thomas Cropper's farm, where it had been used as a drinking-cup by negro farmhands, and was restored to the parish.¹¹³ The inscription may indicate that Assawaman Church succeeded Pongoteague as the parish church of Accomack, although neither church was centrally located in the parish.

The need of a more conveniently placed church is reflected in a petition to the house of burgesses, nearly fifty years later, which also reveals that the parishioners of Accomack were still at odds with their vestry. This petition, dated 24th November, 1720, was submitted by "the Upper Inhabitants of Accomack County praying that a Church may be built according to the Center of the Said County and not as directed by the Vestry and that the Minister may be obliged to preach at the Churches only and not at the Courthouse." Upon consideration of this protest, the House "Resolved, That a Church be built upon Long Love Branch near John Taylor's plantation and a bill be prepared accordingly".¹¹⁴ The bill failed to receive the Governor's signature in 1720, but was passed in the session of May, 1722.¹¹⁵ It undoubtedly refers to the Middle Church, a frame building on the Middle or Wallop's Road, which was in service as early as January, 1727/8, since a vestry meeting is recorded as having been held there in that month.¹¹⁶

Research by Whitelaw and Upshur has established that the site of this Middle Church lay on the west side of the old Middle Road, now U. S. Route 13, and on the north bank of the branch that crosses this road about two miles below Rue and not far above the side road to Parksley.¹¹⁷

After forty years of service, the Middle Church became the Lower Church of Accomack Parish, as reduced by the cutting off of St. George's Parish in 1762. After the passage of another decade, the old frame building became unfit for further service and was replaced by a new church erected near the present settlement of Rue, on a site two miles further north than that of the old Middle Church and on the opposite side of the Middle Road.

¹¹³ Jones, *Old Silver of American Churches*, 168.

¹¹⁴ McIlwaine, *Journals of House of Burgesses*, 279.

¹¹⁵ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 116.

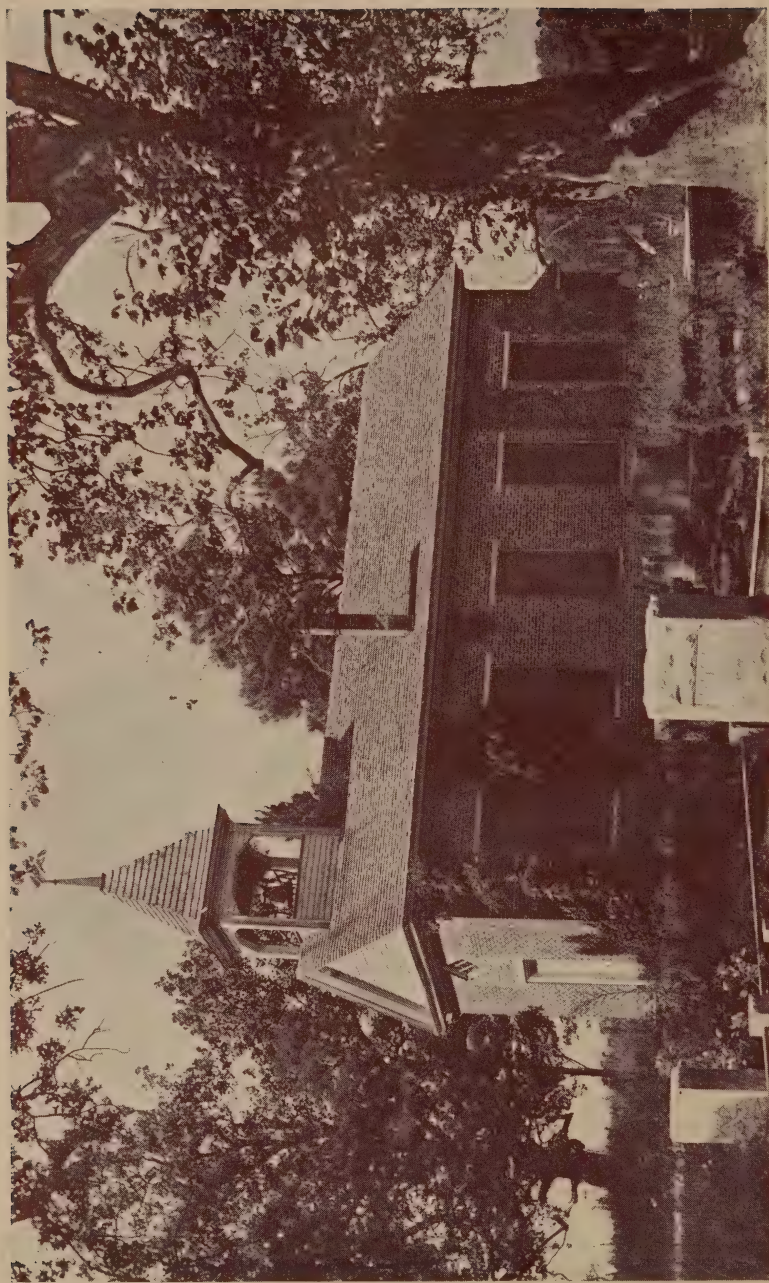
¹¹⁶ *Accomack County Vestry Orders, 1723-84*, Jan. 29, 1727/8.

¹¹⁷ *Accomack County Deeds, Wills, 1729-37*, II, 24.



PLATE 78

Pongoteague Church, today.



Evidence of the construction of this building, as the last Lower Church of Accomack Parish, has been found by Whitelaw and Upshur in a deed of 30th November, 1773, from Shadrach Bayly, conveying to the churchwardens of Accomack Parish, for a consideration of £5, one acre of land "for the Use and Purpose of erecting and Building thereon a Church for the use of the said Parish and of a Church Yard thereon".¹¹⁸

The exact site of this old building is now occupied by Woodberry Methodist Church, which stands on the east side of U. S. Route 13, half a mile south of Gargathy and six miles north of the court-house at Accomac. The Lower Church's later history is unknown and no trace of its foundation is visible. The old church stood near the south bank of a small stream later known as Church Run, which reaches the highway just north of the site.

Another little known Eastern Shore Church is the one which was built at Onancock Town, soon after it was laid out in 1680. Evidence of the existence of this church, a dozen years after the town's establishment, is found in an Accomack County Court order of the 17th May, 1692, requiring William Dennison, surveyor, to "lay out and cause to be cleared with all possible conveniency a good and sufficient Rode from the great Neck of Matomkin to Onancock Town for the conveniency of their Maj^{ties} Subjects to the Church".¹¹⁹

It seems probable that, following the transfer of the courts to Matomkin (the present Accomac) just prior to the opening of the eighteenth century, church services came to be held there instead of at Onancock Church, which therefore had only a brief term of service. This is borne out by the petition of 1720, already quoted, praying "that the Minister may be obliged to preach at the Churches only and not at the Courthouse". An indication that Onancock Church was already in disuse a dozen years before the date of this petition is found in an Accomack court order of 3rd February 1707/8, rehearsing that "Whereas this Co^{rt} was Informed that Sum Ill Dissposed person did put horse or horses into the Church att Onancock Town and fed them the Co^{rt} therefore Ordered that the Sheriff or any well Disposed person or persons doe Inquire to find out the person or persons that hath put the sd horses into the sd Church", which appears to represent an attempt to press the unused church building into service as a barn.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ *Accomack County Deeds*, IV, 214.

¹¹⁹ *Accomack County Orders*, 1690-97, 67.

¹²⁰ *Accomack County Orders*, 1703-09, 107.

In a report of 1724, made to the Bishop of London by the Reverend William Black, rector of Accomack Parish, it is stated that the parish then contained three churches. These three churches must then have been Pongoteague, Assawaman and the Middle Church of 1722, since the last three colonial churches built in Accomack were constructed long after the date of this report.¹²¹ One of these three later churches was the last Lower Church of Accomack Parish, already mentioned. The other two seem to have been erected to provide an upper church for each of Accomack's two parishes' after the county's division, and both of them were called "The New Church".

The location of the more northerly of these two churches, probably built soon after 1762 as the Upper Church of the reduced Accomack parish, is still commemorated by the name of the village of New Church, a mile and a half south of the Maryland boundary line, on U. S. Route 13, which once was the old Middle Road. This building stood in what is now an open field, about two hundred yards east of the main crossroads in New Church village, on the north side of the road to Horntown. It is known to have been a wooden building and, having been abandoned some time after the Revolution, was used as a school during the early years of the nineteenth century. It was again abandoned and, after several years of neglect, burned down, about 1820.

The story of the other "New Church" is more completely told in the colonial vestry book of St. George's Parish, which has been preserved and is on file at Accomack court-house. This record, which extends from February, 1763, until November, 1786, reveals that the construction of the New Church was ordered on the 4th April, 1763, and subsequent entries, referring to it as St. George's Church, show that it was built as the parish church of the new parish. The site chosen was on the Middle Road, on the land of John Felton, and the deed given by him to the parish vestry on 28th February, 1764, conveys four acres of land "for a Church and Church Yard".¹²²

The New Church was built of brick, eighty-six by forty feet, in the clear, and three years were allowed for its construction. The building was received by the vestry on the 10th March, 1767, the builder being Severn Guthrie, a vestryman and church warden in that year. No details of its design are given in the vestry book, except that the space between the windows at the east end was to be paneled. Judging from

¹²¹ Perry, *History of Colonial Church in Virginia*, 300.

¹²² *Accomack County Deeds*, 1757-70, 280.

the number of persons assigned to each pew, in the record, these pews must have been of large size, as in Hungars Church, which was originally of similar dimensions.

It is traditional that, in 1799, there was held in the New Church the unique ceremony of a mock funeral for George Washington, with complete church ritual, a real coffin and pallbearers. Fragmentary vestry records, dating from the close of the colonial vestry book until as late as 1812, indicate that the old church did not suffer prolonged abandonment, like the lower churches on the Eastern Shore,¹²³ and it was repaired and restored to service, under the name of St. James' Church, in 1819, when the parish again became active, the building being reported as in good order in 1831.¹²⁴

Perhaps because of its inconvenient situation, since it had evidently not gone to ruin, the New Church of 1767 was torn down in 1838 and its materials used for the construction of a much smaller church in Drummondtown, now called Accomac. This later structure, an attractive brick building with a spire, is still in use and is known by the older church's later name of St. James' Church. The site of the colonial church of 1767 is two miles south of Accomac, on the west side of the direct road from that town to Onley, still known as the Old Church Road, in commemoration of the ancient building that once stood by the roadside.

No account of the colonial churches of the Eastern Shore would be complete without mention of the Quaker meeting-house which once existed near Nuswattocks. The first mention of such a building is in a "testification" by a Quaker, recorded 27th November, 1660, and reporting an agreement between other Quakers that "a ten foot house should be sett apart for a meeting house untill Thomas Leatherberry made use thereof to put his wheat in".¹²⁵

Evidence that this temporary building was replaced by a more permanent Quaker house of worship is found in the will of George Brickhouse of Nuswattocks, dated 19th November, 1688, which reserves from the bequest of one of his plantations, apparently near that place, "one Acre whereon the meetinge house standeth which I freely give to the people called Quakers forever".¹²⁶ This meeting-house's site has been located through a deed of gift, dated 1699, from John Tilney to

¹²³ Taylor, *Episcopal Church on Eastern Shore*, 19.

¹²⁴ Hawks, *Convention Journals of Diocese of Virginia*, I, 258.

¹²⁵ *Northampton County Orders*, 1657-64, VIII.

¹²⁶ *Northampton County Orders, Wills*, 1683-89, XV, 400.

his daughter and her husband, for two hundred acres of land "on the west side of the meeting house of the People called Quakers". Other boundaries given in this deed place the meeting-house about half a mile south of the present village of Franktown, on the Bayside Road.¹²⁷

Another Quaker meeting-house was built in Accomack County as early as 1683, on Guildford Creek.¹²⁸ This meeting-house was burned in 1694¹²⁹ and rebuilt three years later on a new site on the bank of the same stream.¹³⁰

The existence of these meeting-houses is proof of the fact adduced by Bishop Meade that, despite early prosecution of the Quakers by the civil authorities, respectable members of that sect were finally tolerated on the Eastern Shore.¹³¹

¹²⁷ *Northampton County Deeds, Wills, 1692-1707*, XVI, 240.

¹²⁸ *Accomack County Wills, Deeds, 1676-90*, 366.

¹²⁹ *Accomack County Wills, Orders, 1682-97*, 269.

¹³⁰ *Accomack County Wills, 1692-1715*, I, 295.

¹³¹ Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 255.

Doorways of Colonial Churches in Virginia

DURING THE GENERAL decline of religion in Virginia, following the Revolutionary War and the downfall of the established church, most of our colonial church buildings suffered prolonged neglect or complete abandonment. As a result, only about one-fifth of the two hundred and fifty Virginia churches and chapels, in use at the outbreak of the Revolution, are still standing today. As a result of the extensive reconstruction occasioned by their ruinous condition when restored to service, or of the addition of vestibules in the course of inevitable modern "improvement", less than one-half of these existing churches have retained their original doorways in unaltered form. The surviving examples of doorway design may be considered fairly representative of Virginia colonial church architecture, since they date from almost every period of the colonial era.

The extreme simplicity of our colonial church buildings left them chiefly dependent, for architectural effect, upon their excellent lines and proportions, their pleasing fenestration, and the color and texture of their magnificent brickwork. All but the very earliest colonial church buildings had their walls embellished with glazed headers in decorative Flemish-bond pattern, and the only opportunity for further ornamentation of the structure lay in the elaboration of special trim for the entrance doorways.

This trim, beginning, in the typical seventeenth-century church, with a simple arch of common brick, often of a brighter red than that of the walls, developed, in the eighteenth-century church, into a more elaborate doorway with pilasters and pediment of rubbed or molded brick of special size and color. Native stone was sometimes substituted for this special brick, in the later churches, but even in their most pretentious form, these doorways retained a dignified simplicity in keeping with that of the buildings themselves.

The west doorway of the Old Brick Church (1682?) in Isle of Wight county, illustrated in Plate 80, is the prototype of the circular-headed doorway found in most early seventeenth-century churches in Virginia. The triangular ornament above the door, representing a primitive form of pediment, is not a typical detail, but probably an

original element of the door trim, since it is visible in early photographs of the church. It was probably filled in with white cement, like similar ornamentation on other early colonial buildings, but has been used to frame a marble tablet commemorating the old church's restoration in 1894.

Although the arch above the west door opening in the Jamestown Church tower (1699?) has fallen in, it is evident that this doorway must have been of this simple circular-headed design, and a similar arched doorway is still seen in Merchant's Hope Church (1657?) in Prince George county.

An interesting transitional form of doorway trim is found in the west doorway of Ware Church (1715?), Gloucester county, shown by Plate 81. This is essentially the circular-headed doorway of the early seventeenth-century church, elaborated by the addition of pilasters and an archivolt or arched cornice of molded brick after the Tuscan order. The existing doors are not original, and the ones illustrated have been adapted from original doors of similar proportions found on colonial Abingdon Church in the same county. It will be noted that the dates given in Plates 80 and 81 are the traditional ones, and hence not in accordance with the views expressed earlier in the text, in regard to the probable age of the churches represented.

A more primitive form of doorway trim, intermediate between the simple circular arch of the earliest churches and the elaborated design of the Ware Church doorway, was adopted in two eighteenth-century churches in Princess Anne county, Old Donation Church and the Eastern Shore Chapel. This primitive doorway, as seen on the latter church, has a gauged arch of rubbed brick, supported by common brick pilasters of a brighter hue than the walls, and has no other brick trim whatever. This doorway evidently was modelled after that of the parish church, Old Donation, which in turn may have been derived from an earlier building, as arched doorways were specified for the Lynnhaven churches down to the end of the colonial era.

The west doorway, being the principal entrance to the colonial church, which was invariably oriented (with the chancel in the east), customarily received a more elaborate treatment than the secondary entrance usually located at the south side of the chancel in rectangular church buildings, or at each end of the transept in cruciform churches.

In eighteenth-century colonial churches, both the principal and secondary entrances were regularly of classic pedimented design. In all the existing brick doorways of this classic type, the bricks of the door-

way trim are dark red, 8 x 4 x 2¼ inches in size, rubbed, gauged, and laid in lime putty, with buttered joints, and the workmanship is of the highest character. These special bricks were also used in the gauged arches of the circular-headed windows. They are believed to have been rubbed down to the required size and shape from ordinary bricks, selected for color, and like the larger bricks of the walls, usually 9 x 4½ x 3 inches in size, were almost always of local manufacture.

A fine example of each type of doorway is found, unaltered, in old Vauter's Church (1719²) in Essex county. The west doorway, Plate 82, shows the classic round-topped pediment so generally employed by early eighteenth-century builders for the main entrance doorway of a colonial church. This pediment is a Tuscan adaptation, and is supported by pilasters framing the gauged brick trim of the circular-headed doorway. The glazed-header brickwork of the wall is continued through the interior of the pediment, and is used for the pilaster bases below the beveled water table course, which also extends down the lower sides of the door opening.

The south doorway of Vauter's Church, Plate 83, is typical of the classical pedimented doorway of Tuscan inspiration, which became almost a standard design for the chancel entrances in Virginia colonial churches of the first half of the eighteenth century. The earliest surviving examples of this type are the north and south (chancel) doorways of Ware Church, Gloucester county, but they have a shallower architrave and wider pilasters than the doorway illustrated.

Old Vauter's is one of the few Virginia colonial churches that seem to have retained their original doors and door casings. The doors at both entrances are of double, four-paneled design, rabbeted, with large "H-L" hinges on the inside. A fixed panel within the arched top of the west doorway permits the use of square-topped doors, and the beading on the rabbeted edge of the left-hand door is carried up across the middle of this panel.

The pedimented brick doorways of St. John's Church (1734), King William county, resemble the Vauter's doorways closely enough to have been the work of the same builder. A Civil War picture of St. John's Church (1728), Hampton, shows a south doorway of the same style as in Plate 83, and excellent specimens of both the south and west doorway types may still be seen on Abingdon Church (1755) in Gloucester county, and on the eighteenth-century Stratton Major and Mattapony Churches in King and Queen. The handsome doorways of Christ Church (1732), Lancaster county, Plates 84 and 85, also

belong in this group, although elaborated by the addition of an entablature with pulvinated frieze and of a stone base and cap on each pilaster.

Perhaps the most ornate example of the classic doorway found on any colonial Virginia church today is seen on historic Pohick Church (1774) in Fairfax county, Plate 86. Here the pediment is supported on a deep entablature by pilasters of the Ionic order, enclosing an inner trim of rusticated stonework, with the door head a keyed arch. The church has two west doorways and one south doorway, all of the same design, and the material used is native freestone, as in the corner quoins of the building.

Old Acquia Church in nearby Stafford county has three pedimented doorways, illustrated in Plate 87, with trim of native stone but of much simpler design than Pohick's. In keeping with the stone quoins of this brick church, the pilasters and keyed architrave are rusticated, while the base of the pediment is broken by the door head.

In a class by themselves for artless simplicity and charm are the quaint doorways of ancient Yeocomico Church (1706) in Westmoreland. In Plate 88, the crudely paneled exterior of the main entrance (south) door is shown framed in the opening of the porch, with its unusual ornamentation of three superimposed semicircles, filled in with white cement. This antique entrance door, six by eight feet in size and of double thickness, has a smaller wicket door in the center, and is believed to be a survival from the first Yeocomico Church, a frame building of 1653, on the same site. The inner side of this unique door is shown in Plate 89; it is covered with wide beaded planking and carried by long hand wrought strap hinges from stout pintles at the side of the recessed doorway. The wicket has smaller hinges of similar design, and both doors are secured with deadbolts.

The four wooden churches of colonial origin still standing in Virginia are all of the simplest type and have doorways practically devoid of ornamental trim.

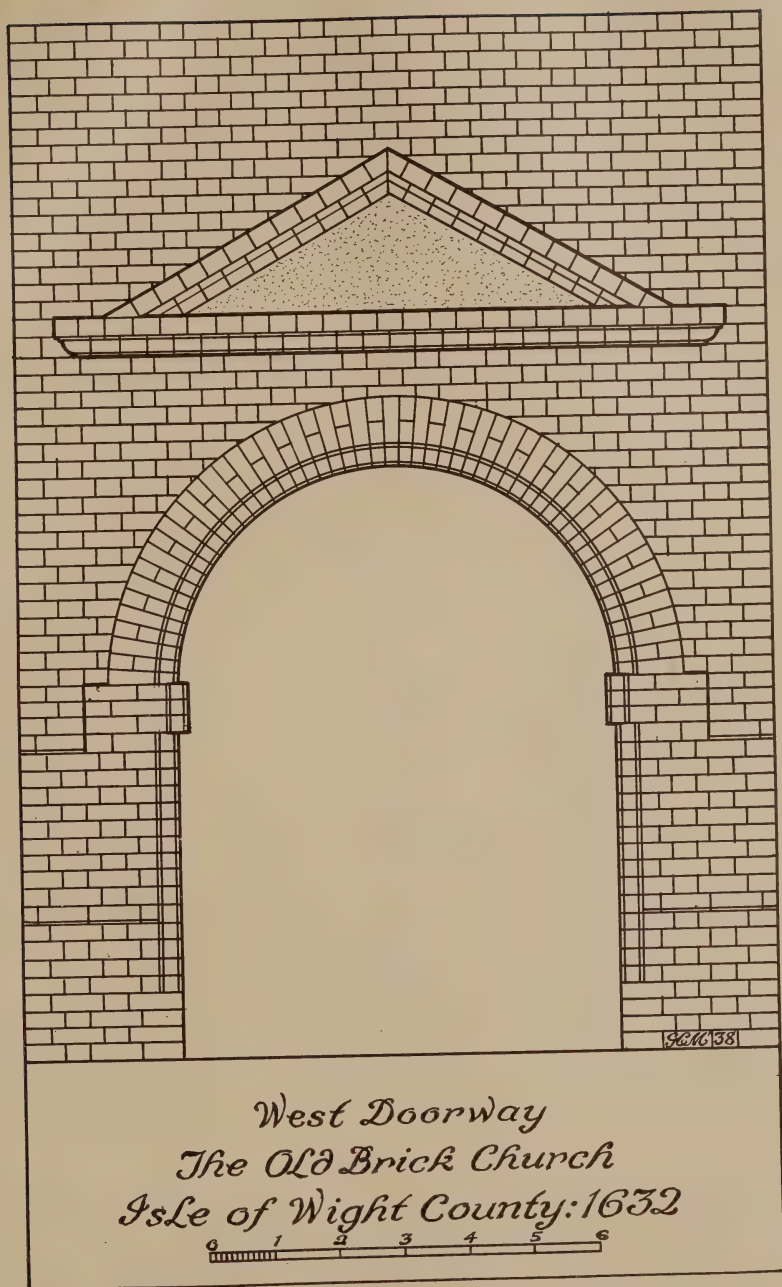
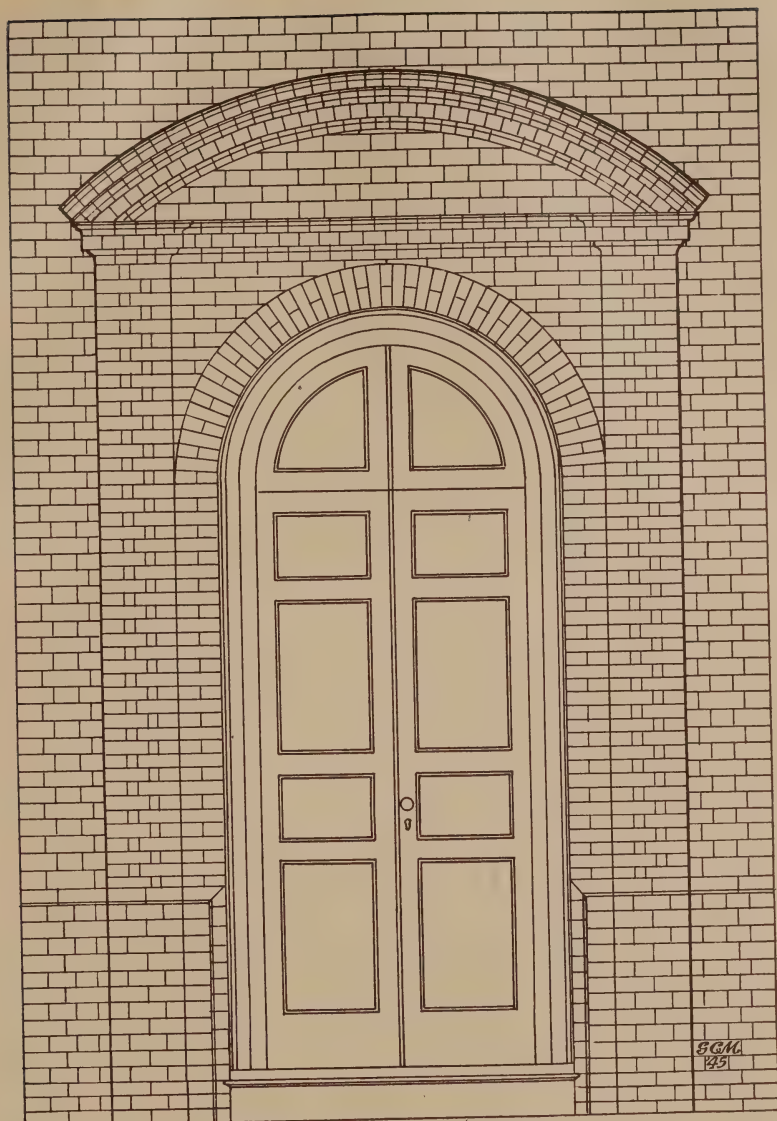


PLATE 80 *No wood doors; tower originally left open
as a porch.*

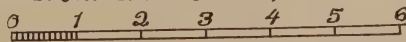


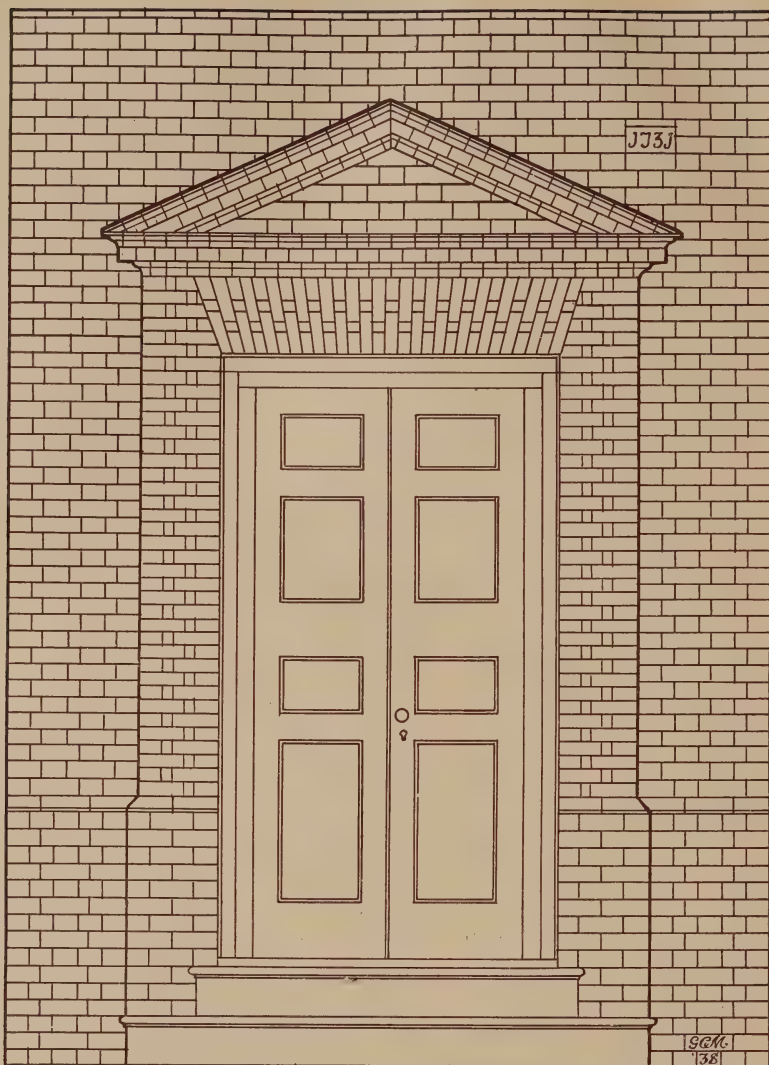
*West Doorway
Ware Church: Gloucester County: 1693*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 ft.



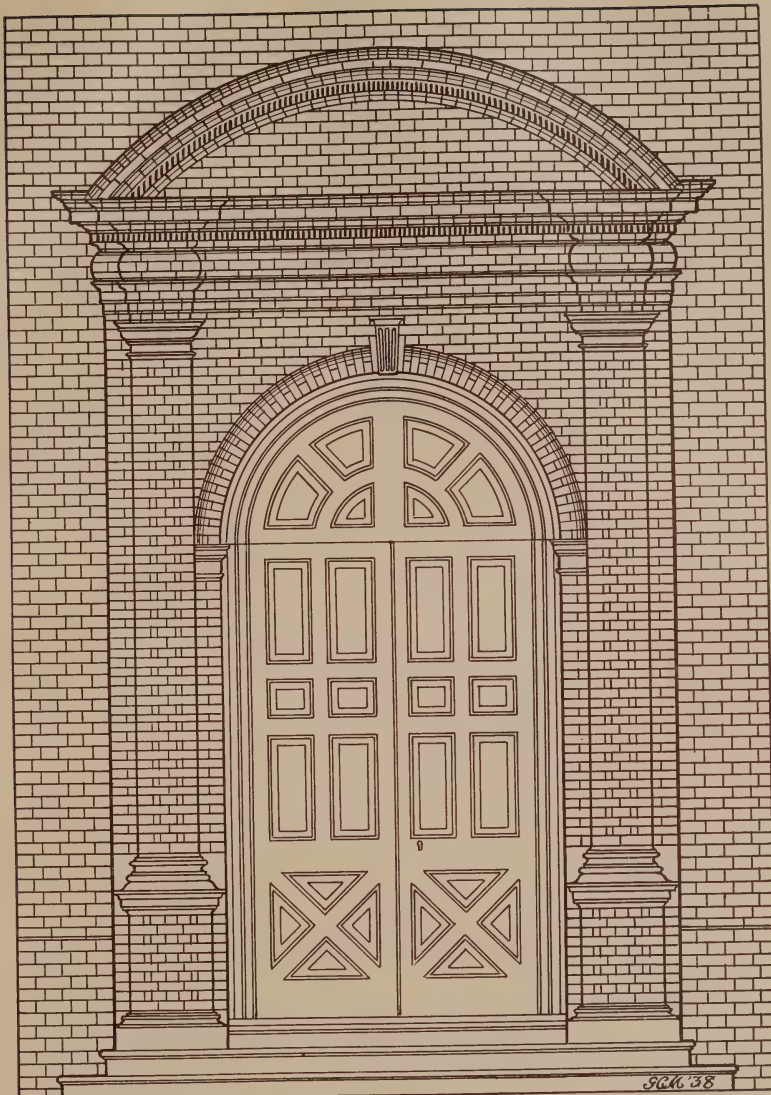
*West Doorway
Vauter's Church: Essex County: 1719*



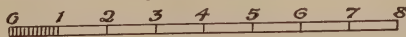


South Doorway
 Vauter's Church: Essex County: 1731
 (In Wing Added to Original Church)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 ft.



*West Doorway
Christ Church: Lancaster County 1732*





*South Doorway
Christ Church: Lancaster County: 1732*

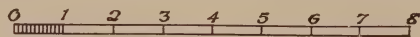


PLATE 85 *Wood doors original; secured with wooden
bar on inside, but no lock or knob.*



West Doorway
Pohick Church: Fairfax County: 1774

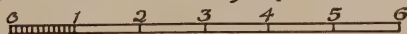
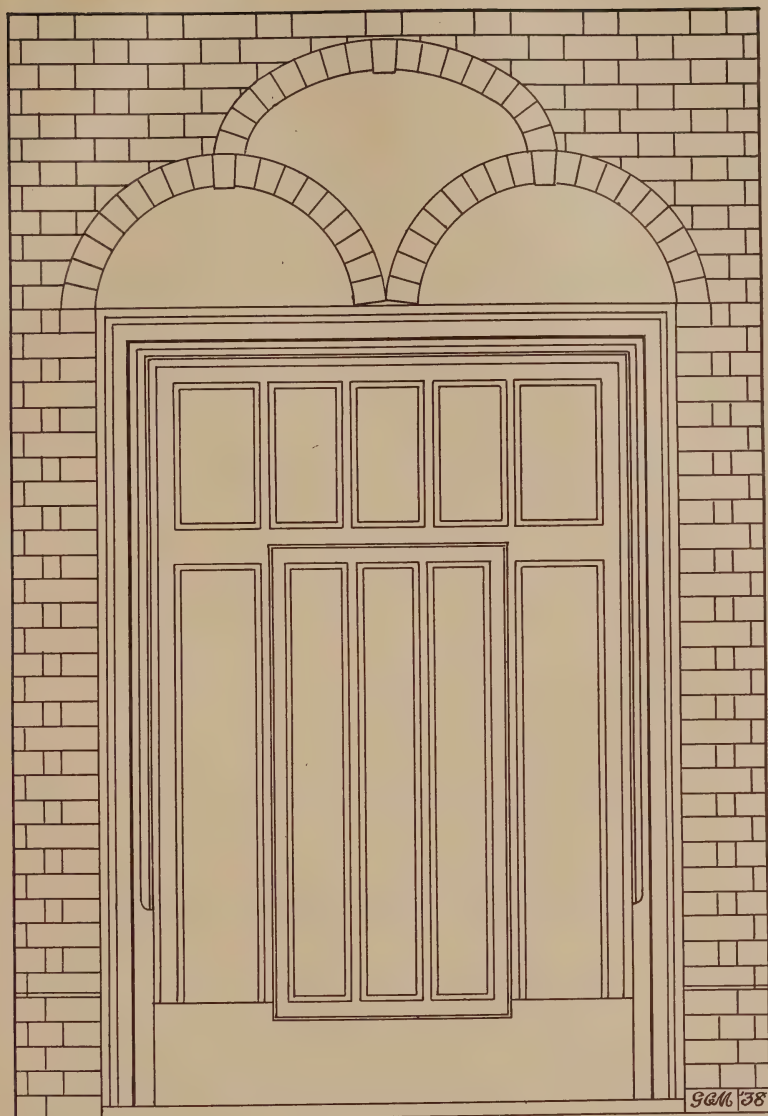




PLATE 87 *Wood doors not original; adapted from
 Vauter's Church.*



*Main South Doorway: Exterior:
Yeocomico Church: Westmoreland: 1706*



PLATE 88 Doorway at front of porch; wood door at
inner doorway, back of porch.

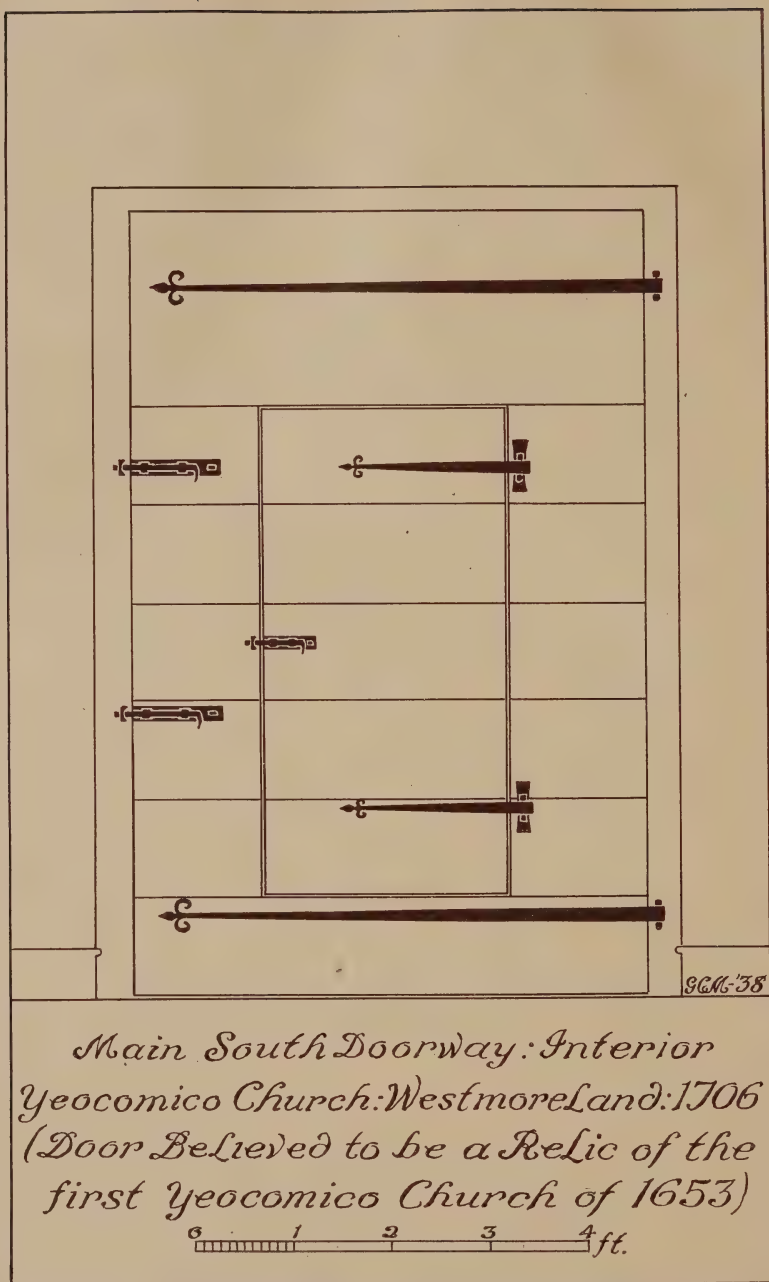


PLATE 89 Wood doors original; secured with deadbolts
on inside, but no lock or knob.

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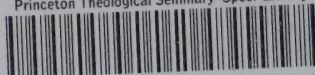
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